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MARMADUKE WYVIL;

OR,

THE MAID'S REVENGE.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

BY HENRY WM. HERBERT, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF "OLIVER CROMWELL." &c.

"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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1843.

C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

TO THE

HONOURABLE AND VERY REVEREND

THE DEAN OF MANCHESTER,

THIS little work is affectionately dedicated, as a very inadequate, though very sincere, token of gratitude, not only for more than a father's love and tenderness, but for imbuing him from his earliest age with a taste for those pursuits, in which he delights humbly to follow, though he may never hope to emulate the steps of one, who, whether in the pulpit, at the bar, or in the forum, whether in the abstruse walks of science, or in the easier paths of poesy, has won respect and honour, and esteem from his contemporaries, and may aspire to renown from posterity,

By his Son,

HENRY W. HERBERT.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In presenting himself, for the first time, in propriâ personâ, as a candidate for the favour of his countrymen, the author of "Oliver Cromwell" takes the liberty, in the first place, to thank them for the kindness with which they received that work, when introduced to their notice under the distinguished sanction of Mr. Horace Smith; and to express a hope that they will not deny to "Marmaduke Wyvil" that meed of encouragement, by which alone he was emboldened again to appear before them.

Among many faults, which doubtless will be discovered in the following pages, he is bold, however, to assert, that there is not a word, that can do harm, and to hope that there may be something not wholly valueless in the at-

tempt to depict the contest between human principles and human passions.

In venturing to interweave, with a texture of pure fiction, a slight thread of historic narrative, embodying a few facts and incidents of a stirring period, he has never intentionally deviated from the truth of history ; and should any persons feel so much interest as to care for the investigation of the few things remarkable which they will meet with, they will find them more fully and vigorously detailed in the " Memoires Relatifs à la Revolution d'Angleterre"—the "Memoirs of the Cardinal De Retz," and in the " Lives of Celebrated Statesmen," by Mr. James—to all of which works he confesses his own large obligation.

March 31, 1843.

ERRATA.

VOL. I.—Page 11, last line, for "sixteenth summer," read "twentieth summer."—Page 81, line 13, after "greensward," insert "in the early spring time."—Same page, line 14, after "overrun," insert "in summer."

MARMADUKE WYVIL.

CHAPTER I

In a sequestered vale of merry England, not many miles from the county-town of Worcester, there stands, in excellent preservation, even to the present day, one of those many mansions scattered through the land, which, formerly the manor-houses of a race, now, like their dwellings, becoming rapidly extinct—the old English squirearchy—have, for the most part, been converted into farm-

houses; since their ancient proprietors have simultaneously, with the growth of vaster fortunes, and the rise of loftier dignities, declined into an humbler sphere.

In the days of which we write, however, Woolverton Hall was in the hands of the same family, which had dwelt there, father and son, for ages. It was a tall, irregular edifice, of bright-red brick, composed of two long buildings, with steep flagged roofs and pointed gables, meeting exactly at right angles, so as to form a letter L; the longer limb running due east and west, the shorter abutting on the eastern end, and pointing with its gable southerly. In this south gable, near the top, was a tall, Gothic, lanceolated window, its mullions and casings wrought of a yellowish sand-stone, to match the corner stones of all the angles, which were faced with the same material; beneath this window, which, as seen from without,

appeared to reach nearly from the floor to the ceiling of the second story, was the date, 1559—the numerals, several feet in length, composed of rusty iron; and above it, on the summit of the gable, a tall weathercock, surmounted by a vane shaped like a dolphin, which had once been fairly gilded, but now was all dim and tarnished by long exposure to the seasons.

To this part of the house there were no chimneys, which was the more remarkable as the rest of the building was somewhat superfluously adorned with these appendages, rising like columns, quaintly wrought of brickwork in the old Elizabethan style. Corresponding to the Gothic window in position, though by no means so lofty, a range of five large square-topped latticed windows, divided each into four compartments by a cross-shaped stone transom, ran all along that front of the other wing, which, with the

abutting chapel—for such it seemed to be—formed the interior angle of the L. From the point of the western roof, to match, as it were, the weathercock which crowned the other gable, projected a long beam or horn of stone, at an angle of about ninety degrees, curiously wreathed with a deep spiral groove, not much unlike the tusk of that singular animal the sword-fish.

This was all that could be seen of the main building, from without, by a spectator looking at its southern front—for it stood in a court surrounded by a heavy wall of brick, with a projecting parapet and battlement of stone, flanked by short towers, with roofs shaped like extinguishers, and having its base washed by a broad rapid rivulet, which, rushing through a narrow artificial channel, along the eastern wall, expanded in front of the house into a wider bed; and after falling over a steep dam, swept off down the lone

valley to the left, in a south-westerly direction. In the outer wall, close to the base of a flanking tower, crenelled and looped for musketry and ordnance, was a low water-gate, well closed with a portcullis of stout iron bars; and, some ten feet within, by a strong second door of oak, studded with massy nails. Toward the west, the court-yard wall rose higher, for there a smooth and velvet lawn, with no impediment of fosse or ditch, swept, with a slight ascent, up to its very foot; and in the centre of its length, seen, in perspective, by one standing as above, was an embattled gate-house.

It should be added that, from within this wall, the tops of many ornamental trees might be discovered, now slightly tinged with the first hues of autumn. The northern and eastern faces of the house, which could not, of course, be seen from

the position indicated, displayed no entrances, nor aught save narrow loops and shot-holes on the ground-floor, while, even on the upper stories, the apertures for air and light were small, and guarded against escalade by heavy iron gratings.

The whole had evidently been originally meant, no less for a defensible position, than for a peaceful dwelling, in those stern days, when every man's house was, in truth, his castle; but easier times had followed, and many of the sterner points had been concealed, and that not casually, by graces and embellishments of milder nature. Fruit-trees and many flowering creepers were trained along the landward fronts of the main building; a mass of dense and tangled ivy covered the turrets of the gate-house, and on the moat—little designed for such use by its makers—floated two stately swans, their graceful necks and snow-white plumage

reflected to the life, on its transparent bosom, with a whole host of smaller waterfowl, teal, widgeon, golden-eyes, and others of rare foreign species, diving and revelling, half reclaimed, in pursuit of their prey or pleasure.

Such was the aspect of the hall, on the day following the desperate fight of Worcester, the sounds of which—the dull deep bellowing of the cannon, blent with the harsh discordant rattle of the volleying arquebuse—had been distinctly heard by its dismayed inhabitants. Some symptoms of fresh preparation were there, though, for the most part, slight and ineffective—the creepers had been cut away in places where they had entirely obscured the crenelles; fresh loopholes had been cut in the western wall; a few small cannon, falcons and culverins, were mounted on the parapet; and from an embrasure, which flanked the water-gate, the

muzzle of a heavy gun was run out, grinning its stern defiance. There was no flag, however, displayed from the walls; no show of any garrison, not so much even as a solitary sentinel—so that there was no reason to believe the inmates partisans of either of those factions which had so long disturbed the country; or to suppose them capable of any more prolonged defence, than might suffice to beat off the marauders, who, ever profiting by times of civil discord, levied their contributions equally on friend or foe, or neutral.

South of the moat, the bank of which was fringed with a low shrubby coppice, mostly of ornamental plants and bushes, a park-like meadow dotted with clumps of trees, and full of sunny slopes, and cool deep hollows extended half a mile, perhaps, in width, to the high-road, from which it was divided by a broad sunk fence and ragged paling; and

was flanked by the stream, which, strong and deep and rapid, had cut itself a deep gorge through the rich alluvial soil, the sides thick-set with broom and furze and brachens, and many a polished holly-bush, and many an ash and alder, forming a dense and seemingly impervious brake. Beyond the river, which the road traversed on an old one-arched bridge of brick, lay a wide track of low and swampy woodland; and at the angle of the park, formed by the meeting of the highway and the brook, stood a small fishing-house, much overgrown with ivy, but kept in good repair, as might be seen by the neat painted lattices, one of which, standing open, showed a white muslin curtain gracefully looped up, and a small table with a vase of flowers arranged there, evidently by a woman's hand.

This scene, with all its details, has not been thus particularly and closely drawn,

from the mere wish of laying a picture before the eyes of the reader,—although it *is* a picture, and a true one,—but from a desire of impressing on the mind localities, without a full and distinct perception of which, much of the melancholy tale to be related would be obscure, to such a degree, as to lose one half of its interest.

It was, as has been said, on the day following Worcester fight—the crowning mercy of that remarkable man who swayed so skilfully the destinies of the great kingdom which he so strangely won—that Woolverton Hall looked, in the level rays of the declining sun, as it is here described. The morning had been raw and gusty, and though towards sunset the chilly clouds had opened, and let out a few faint beams to gild the melancholy hues of autumn, which were encroaching fast upon the cheerful greenery of the woods, it was but a gray and gloomy

evening. A few small birds had, indeed, mustered courage to chirrup some short notes to the brief sunbeams, and a single throstle was pouring out his liquid song from the thick foliage on the river-bank; but the wind whistled dolefully, although not high, among the tree-tops, whirling away the sere leaves with its every breath; and a thin ghostly mist seethed upward from the surface of the brook, like the steam of a caldron, and through its smoky wreathes flapped the broad pinions of that aquatic hermit, the gray heronshaw, meet habitant of such a spot.

Sadly, however, as the scene, beautiful in ordinary aspects, and romantically wild, showed, under such a sky, it was yet gazed upon by soft and lovely eyes; for, from the open lattice of the fishing-house, nearest to the highway, a young girl, surely not far past her sixteenth summer, looked forth half list-

lessly, half mournfully, over the bridge, and up the sandy road, which, skirting the dank woodlands, wound over a small hill, the verge of which cut clear against the ruddy sky at a mile's distance.

She was a genuine English beauty, with a fair and oval face, of a bright delicate complexion, shaded by a profusion of rich nut-brown hair, falling in ample curls from off her lustrous brow, and sweeping in thick clusters down her neck. Her eyes were of a full bright blue, with long dark lashes; and they, and all her features, spoke volumes of soft, gentle girlish feelings—of tenderness and pity; and of love, latent, but ready to leap forth a giant from his birth. Her figure was below, rather than above, the middle height of woman; but exquisitely shaped, and far more full and rounded, although her waist was very slender, than usual at her years. Her arm, which was a good deal displayed

by the open falling sleeve of the period, was symmetry itself; and her whole person, and its every movement, full of that graceful ease which goes yet further to win hearts than the most regal beauty.

A book or two lay scattered on the table at her side, and an oldfashioned lute; while at her feet, stretched out at his full length, was an enormous blood-hound, his lythe and sinewy limbs now all relaxed and easy, his huge black-muzzled head quietly couched between his paws, and his smooth tawny hide glancing like copper in the last lurid sunbeam. But now that sunbeam vanished; a deeper shade sank down over the landscape, a dull gray hue, swallowed up all the glimmering tints that gemmed the fleecy clouds with light; and all was dim and dark — woodland and mead and sky and river, except one pale bright streak far in the west, against which

the brow of the hill, with the road winding over it, stood out in clear relief.

The girl who had been gazing so long on the darkening scene, evidently half unconscious that she did so, suddenly seemed to recollect herself, and gathering her cloak about her, drew its hood over her rich tresses, and rose as if to go—the blood-hound, wakened from his doze by her light tread, lifted his head, yawned lazily, and stretched himself; and then arising to his full height, looked wistfully into her face, as if he were aware of the importance of his trust.

But at that very moment a dull flat report, as of a distant gun-shot, broke the silence; and the dog pricked his pendulous ears, and stalked with a low growl to the doorway; while the lady turned her head quickly toward the window whence she had just withdrawn. Her first glance was

toward the road; and, where it crossed the hill-top, she saw clearly the head of a man, and then his whole figure, with his horse, rise rapidly against the brilliant gleam of the western sky—so instantaneous was his transit, however, that she would almost have distrusted her eyesight, had not the clatter of hoofs dashing fiercely down the hill-side, assured her of its accuracy—for now the slope and base of the hill were all in misty and uncertain shadow. Before she had well thought on what she had scarce seen, another and another and another head crossed the steep verge — and, as they crossed it, were discovered, by the bright glitter, to be covered with steel caps, the well-known head-dress of the puritan troopers—another second sufficed to bring into full view a party of some twenty horse, who halted for a moment on the summit—a dozen of quick flashes ran along their

front, and the sharp rattle of a volley followed — again a minute — and they, too, had galloped down the slope, and were enveloped in thick gloom.

All this passed in less time than it has taken to describe it, but still the lady had marked and understood it all; and acted on the instant as a kind heart, instigated by woman's natural sympathy with the oppressed, dictated. With a quick step she left the fishing-house, and stood upon a little flight of steps which ran down a platform, level with the bridge to the stream's brink. And scarcely had she reached her stand, before the single horseman wheeled round the angle of the wood, and crossed the bridge at as fast a rate as his drooping steed could compass. The pursuers, scarcely five hundred yards behind him, were still beyond the woodland, which alone hindered them from seeing him.

"Hist!" she cried, "Hist! Sir Cavalier," in clear low tones, which made themselves distinctly audible to him whom she addressed, though they could scarcely have been heard at three yards distance. "Halt, as you love your life. Halt, for God's sake!"

Almost instinctively the rider drew his rein; and the wearied horse obeyed so readily, that he stood statue-like upon the instant. The horseman was a tall slight figure, with a slouched hat and drooping feather, a cuirass of bright steel, crossed by a broad blue baldric, and all his buff coat slashed with satin, and fringed with Flanders lace—thus much she saw at half a glance, and it confirmed all she supposed and dreaded.

"You have but one chance for your life!" she said,—"but one only!—there is another troop of Cromwell's horse not half a league before you. Light down! light

down! for God's sake, while yet they are behind the wood—nay! speak not, but light down," she continued, even more vehemently, seeing him now about to answer. "Do it with the speed of light—cross the bridge back again, fasten your horse there in the wood, and join me instantly—I can—and I *will* save you, so you delay not!"

The tramp of galloping horses came nearer, and the shouts of the pursuers—he paused, he doubted, but as if to accelerate his resolve, a distant trumpet tone, and the long hollow boom of a kettle-drum came down the road from the direction he was following, and proved the hopelessness of flight. He turned his horse's head,—"Lady," he said, "I trust you—I obey." He retraced his steps quickly, and had just reached the friendly covert, when, at the top of their speed, the puritans drove round the corner—a second sooner and he had perished at her feet.

With instant readiness of mind, she hurried down the steps, bidding the hound, in a low voice, be still,—and from the last low stair, sprang lightly to a small abutment of the bridge just level with the water, under the arch; and scarcely was she there, before, with clash of harness and jingling of spur and scabbard, and all the thundering din of charging horse, the troopers drove above her head. The solid masonry appeared to quake beneath the fury of their speed. Her heart stood still with awe—then, as the tumult passed, and died away in the distance, bounded as though it would have burst her bosom. Timidly, cautiously, she crept up the damp mossy steps, and reached the causeway—and hardly was she there, when a dim shape came crouching toward her from the woodland.

"Heaven be praised!" she exclaimed, as he stood safely by her side. "Follow

me swift and silently—for life is on our speed!" Descending once more to the margin of the water, she drew aside the tangled branches, and entered a small winding footpath, worn by the devious tread of the wild deer, and widened by the steps of village urchins, nutting or bird-nesting among the matted dingle. So narrow was the track, however, and so abruptly did it twist and turn round many a doddered ivy-bush and stunted oak, now covered, for a few steps, by the shallow ripples of the stream, now scaling the ravine by sudden zigzags, that none but a well practised eye could have discovered it by that glimmering twilight.

Though well aware that life was on his speed—that the avenger of blood was but a little way behind—the stranger scarcely could keep up, though muscular and swift of foot, and active, with the deer-like speed of

his fair guide. At length, after a rapid walk of perhaps ten minutes, they reached the dam at the moat-head—where was a low-arched boat-house, with a small light skiff moored beneath it—and stood quietly facing the south side of the mansion. From the two windows, farthest from the chapel of the five in the upper range, a steady light was shining into the quiet night—and from a loop beside the water-gate, a long red ray streamed out, casting a wavering line of radiance over the rippling water. With these exceptions, all was profoundly dark and silent. By the boat-house she paused a moment, as if in deep reflection.

"They will come here anon!" she said, "and search the house from battlement to cellar, before we can bestow you where we would. And I must find the means and speak, too, with my father—and while here you must tarry—here—"

never dream of searching." And as she spoke she stooped under the low-browed arch, and tripped along a little rib of stone-work, scarcely a foot in width, to the extreme end of the boat-house, where was a small paved landing, with three steps downward to the water, and a slight wooden ladder upward, leading to a small hole beside the key-stone of the arch.

"Up there," she cried, laying her hand upon the ladder, which they could just distinguish by the reflection of the windows from the moat. "It is a little sail-loft, not two feet high, under the slated roof, full of old sails and oars. Up there, and draw the ladder after you, and should they come to search there—which they will *not*, I think —roll yourself in the canvass and lie still. And now attend to me. There is a little airhole in the front, towards the house, whence you can see the windows. Can you

swim, sir?—you can, I warrant me!" and as she heard his brief affirmative, she went on rapidly, "well, when you see that red light thrice extinguished, and thrice relighted, with such pause that you may reckon ten between, come down, swim boldly to the water-gate, and I will be there to admit you. Farewell—God keep you!" and she stepped into the light boat, unmoored, and pushed it out, while the young cavalier ascended, and drew up the ladder obedient to her bidding.

The distance was but short, and the light paddle, wielded by her fairy hands, scarcely had cut the surface six times, ere the boat floated by the portcullis of the water-gate; and a voice somewhat tremulous from age, hailed from the lighted shot-hole, inquiring who was there.

"'Tis I—'tis I, good Jeremy," she answered. "Ope to me, quickly, for it is somewhat late

and cold for the season." The aged servitor required no second bidding; the grating was drawn up, the inner doors thrown open, and —while the old man held his link on high, casting a smoky light over the steps, and the black water, and several boats moored there of various sizes—two younger grooms, with badges on the sleeves of their jerkins, ran out along the platforms on each side, and drew the boat, with its fair freight, up to the inner landing. The gates were again barred, and the portcullis lowered—the cresset in the ward-room was extinguished, and Jeremy preceding with the torch, and the grooms following cap in hand, the lady passed out from the water-tower into the courtyard of the hall.

The upper portion of the building, as viewed from without the walls, has been described already; but a new prospect was now shown—the court, from the walls of

the chapel, to the gate-house at its western end, would have measured not less than a hundred yards, one half of which, towards the gate, was laid out in a formal parterre divided from the rest by a stone balustrade, with richly-covered stone vases, and planted thickly with yew and box and holly, clipped into all fantastic shapes of peacocks, centaurs, dragons, and the like, according to the taste of that old day, with two time-honoured gigantic beeches presiding over them, like Samsons in all the majesty of unshorn strength and beauty. The remaining space was open, paved with small pebbles, divided by long rays of granite curb-stones, diverging from a common centre, where, in an ornamental basin, played a small fountain.

The door of the mansion, under a low stone arch, bearing upon its key-stone the same date, 1559, was placed exactly at the extremity of the main building, where the

abutting chapel formed a right angle, and was flanked by several long crenelles for musketry, which, it would seem, with similar apertures, had formerly been the only means of giving light to the ground-floor of the edifice. Of these, however, only five remained flanking the doorway, while, for the others, had been substituted good honest latticed casements, four in the front, under the windows of the upper story, the portal corresponding to the fifth, and two in the basement of the chapel. From all of these now shone a bright and cheerful radiance through the transparent medium of snow-white curtains, against which, many a shadow of male and female forms was cast, as persons hurried to and fro between them and the lights; while ever and anon the hum of merry voices and light laughter rang out into the night, suggesting many an image of fireside English comfort.

Not long, however, did the lady pause to note a scene which she had looked upon many times daily from her childhood, but passed across an angle of the garden, and through the middle of the court, directly to the door. It was a formidable massive-looking remnant of antiquity—a piece of hard black oak, six inches thick, all clenched with great nail-heads, and crossed with iron bars—yet it stood on the latch, which gave way readily to the light touch of the lady and admitted her to a small, neat, square hall with two doors to the right and left, and a huge staircase at the back—the steps, and balustrades and wainscoting, and floor, all made of beautiful and highly-polished oak. A Gothic window, with stained glass, in the second story,—for the hall was the whole height of the building, with a gallery above, —lighted it in the day; but now a brazen lamp, with several blazing branches, swung by a crimson cord from the roof.

Two or three portraits hung upon the wall, grim-visaged warriors cap-à-pie in steel, with brandished truncheons—and long-waisted ladies, looking unutterable sweetness at huge nosegays. Upon a large slab table, under the first turn of the staircase, lay several gloves, a broad-leafed hat and feather, and a sad-coloured riding-cloak of camlet; while, in the corner, stood a miscellaneous assortment of hand-guns, fishing-rods, cross-bows, and hunting-poles,—weapons of rural sport,—as on the walls above hung suits of bright plate armour, with arquebuse and petronil and pike, and every implement of veritable warfare.

"There—that will do, Jeremy. I trow I shall find my father in the library above!—that will do—go your ways to supper," said the fair girl, waving her hand to her attendants, eager to get away from the restraint imposed upon her by their presence; and as they disappeared through the door to the

right—whence, as they opened it, proceeded a most savoury smell of supper, and a loud buzz of merriment—bounded, with a light foot but anxious heart, up the broad staircase; hurried through several spacious rooms, illuminated only by the dim glimmering of the new risen moon, and, entering the library, stood in a broad glare of light before her father's chair.

CHAPTER II.

THE apartment which the lady entered, was a small room, furnished on every side with bookcases and presses of some dark foreign wood, which, indeed, covered all the wall, with the exception of the panel immediately above the mantelpiece, and this was filled by a large and exquisitely-painted portrait. There needed not two glances before pronouncing it a masterpiece of Anthony Vandyke; it was a lady, in the pride and prime of youthful beauty, and the calm melancholy features and dark glossy

curls told, beyond doubt, the place which she had occupied in that old house, and the relationship she bore to the fair girl who stood below, younger and fresher and more gay, but still the breathing counterpart of the old picture.

The only inmate of the room, when the girl cast the door abruptly open, was a man very far advanced in years, but yet of stately presence—time, which had covered his fine classic head with the thin snows of nearly fourscore winters, and ploughed deep lines of care and thought on his expansive brow, had not curtailed his upright stature by one inch, nor dimmed at all the lustre of his dark brilliant eye. He had been, it would seem, employed in writing; for the pen was yet in his fingers, and paper lay before him with many books on the table. But the unwonted speed of his daughter's tread had excited him—for those were days when each new hour brought

a new tale of terror, and men not naturally observant, were forced to become so, by the immediate pressure of events. He had arisen, therefore, from his cushioned chair which he had pushed back towards the ruddy hearth, and even taken a step or two toward the door—when it flew open, and with cheeks paler than usual, and a slight air of anxiety, but, nevertheless, all calm and passionless and tranquil, she stood before him.

"Why, how now, Alice," he exclaimed; "what has gone wrong now—what is amiss, my darling, and wherefore so late?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing is amiss, dear father," she replied, forcing a smile, which, nevertheless, failed to deceive his fears, or calm his apprehension. "Nothing has gone wrong, I assure you, but I have much to tell you, and brief space wherein to do

so; and, above all, I fear me much we shall ere long have most unwelcome visiters."

"Sit down, then—sit down, Alice, and tell me all about it—if there be brief space, so much the more need for good haste; and he pulled forward, as he spoke, a settle from the corner of the chimney, and placed himself in his own seat in attitude of deep attention.

"Well, father, to begin," she said, "I took the little skiff, when you came up to write, and crossed the moat, and walked down with old Talbot to the fishing-house by the high-road to Worcester; and there I got engaged with a book till my attention was called from it by sounds of martial music, sounding away beyond the top of Longmire Hill; and then I looked out in surprise, for we had heard, you know, that the troops had all moved away southward, and saw first one, and then a

second troop of horsemen file down the slope; and, as I did not fear at all, having no cause to do so, I waited there to see them pass, and they were men of Cromwell's own regiment of Ironsides, with scarlet cassocks, and bright corslets, and steel caps, and large boots, and no feathers. There were above a hundred of them, and they rode by quite leisurely, laughing and chatting, and some smoking.

"And when they had passed by, I fell into a sort of revery, which must have lasted a long time, for when I recollected myself, it had become quite gray and dark; and there was no light in the sky except one yellow gleam along the summit of the hill, where the road crosses it. And then I rose to go away, and had put on my cloak, when a sound like the shot of a hand-gun or pistolet, attracted me, and I looked out again and saw one horseman

cross the ridge at a full gallop, and half a minute after, the top was covered by a whole troop of Puritans, for I could see the glitter of their helmets, and they halted and fired a volley, and charged down hill after him.

"So then I went out on the platform by the bridge, and waited till he came up—a tall young gentleman, with long light hair, and a slouched hat and feather, and a steel breastplate with a broad blue scarf across it; and I called out to him to stop, and told him how there was another company of horse before, and bade him turn back, and tie up his own beast, sorely jaded it was, too, though a noble charger—down in the heronry wood, and to join me while his pursuers were hid behind the tall trees of the beech clump, and he went back—and was just out of sight, when the whole party turned the corner, and drove down

shouting and brandishing their swords, at a fierce gallop. Then I ran down the steps, and hid beneath the arch of the brick bridge, while they dashed on overhead. Not one of them saw me or Talbot, I'm quite certain, and the dog never growled nor showed his teeth, but seemed to know what was to do, as well as I did.

"When they had all gone by again, I ran up to the top once more, and then he joined me; and I brought him home along the little path through the dark dingle; and when we reached the boat-house I showed him the sail-loft, and made him mount the ladder and draw it after him; and then I crossed the moat alone, and came directly home to tell you all that I had done. And I *have* done right have not I, my father?"

"Right! right, of course, my girl; you could not see the fair youth slain. Yet 'tis an awkward chance. None of the serving-

men nor foresters saw him with you, you are certain?"

"Certain—most certain!"

"So far well—these troopers, as you say, will be here anon, and will search all the house;—but they know me, that I have not borne arms nor taken any part in these sad broils, and our cousin Chaloner has drawn his sword for the commonwealth; so that if we can hide him from this first search, I feel little but that we may preserve him. He must stay where he is, at present, and until they be here and the search over—then will we have him in when it's quite late, and hide him in the priest's hole. Did any of the first party of troopers see you?"

"One did, and pointed me to his next comrade, and I heard them laugh and whisper."

"Then this must be your tale: You saw

the two first companies go by, and tarried at the fishing-house yet longer, but when you heard the shots, you were afraid, and fled across the park to the boat-house, and came here by the skiff."

"Were it not better, father," she replied, "to make no mention of the boat-house, lest they should search and—"

"No! no," he answered—"oh, no, no! They will interrogate the servants, and learn where the boat lay, and so will suspect what you would conceal, even from your own omission."

"I see," she replied, thoughtfully. "Yet 'tis a fearful risk."

"It is so, Alice," answered the old man —"it is so; yet, fearful as it is, it must be run. And now away—go to your bower, and call your tire-woman, and dress as is your wont; and then to supper;—all must go on as usual; we must leave them no hint whereon to hang suspicion."

She left the library, and in a little while returned with her dark hair combed back from her fair brow, and neatly braided, and all her dress chastely arranged as for the evening meal. The pair descended to the hall, where, as was customary in those unsophisticated days, the household was assembled to partake, at the same board, of the same meal which was prepared for their superiors. With easy dignity, but nought of stern pride or of cold presumption, the aged gentleman presided with his sweet child beside him; but ere the meal was ended, the interruption—by at least two of the party fully expected—occurred to break it short. A trumpet was blown clamorously at the gate-house, and before it could by any possibility have been answered, a second and a third blast followed.

"Go, some of you, and see," exclaimed the master of the house, with an air of

the most perfect unconcern—"go see who calls so rudely—bestir you, or the man will blow the gate down."

Two or three of the badged green-coated serving-men, of whom the hall was full, ran off at speed to perform his bidding; but ere they reached the gates the porter had discharged his duty, and forty or fifty of the ironsides dismounted and marched in, their long steel scabbards and huge boots clanking and clattering over the paved court-yard, while thrice as many of their comrades were drawn up round the house on horseback so as to form a cordon, rendering escape impossible except by the moat, which, of course, could not be included in the chain of sentries.

"Ten men, with Sergeant Goodenough, straight to the water-gate," shouted a loud authoritative voice—"cut down or shoot all who attempt to pass without the word."

"Ha! here is something more than common," cried the old man, "nay, fear not, gentle daughter, I will go see to it," and he arose as if to put his words into effect, when the doors were thrown violently open, and two officers — one a rough-looking veteran, well seamed with scars of ancient honourable wars, the other a sleek, hypocritical looking youth, with a head of close-cropped foxy hair, and an evil downcast eye—both clad in the full uniform of Cromwell's Ironsides, and with their swords drawn, entered; while about the door clustered a group of privates, with their musketoons all unslung, and their slow matches lighted.

"Let no one quit the room, who would not die the death," exclaimed the first who entered.

"What means this outrage, gentlemen; if gentlemen ye be, who violently thus

intrude upon a female's presence, with your war-weapons and rude tongues? What make ye in my peaceful dwelling at this untimely hour?"

"It means, Marc Selby," replied the second, in a low, nasal strain—"it means that thou, despite our noble general's proclamation, hast traitorously harbored and secreted one of those rakehell cavaliers, whom, yesterday, the Lord delivered into our hands, to slay them. Wherefore surrender him at once, so shalt thou 'scape the penalty this time on strength of thy relationship with stout and trusty Henry Chaloner."

"What cavalier? of whom speak ye? I know not whom ye mean. My household, save the porter and the scullions, are all here. Save ourselves, there are none else in all the house."

"Lie not!" replied the young man

violently—"lie not, lest the Lord deal with ye, as he dealt in old time with Ananias and Sapphira."

"I thank thee for thy courtesy, and shall make thee no answer any more. Search the house if ye will—ye will find no one here!"

"We will search—and search thoroughly—yea! very thoroughly! for though thou thinkest it not, we know your secret corners, your priest's holes, and your jesuit's hidings—yea! we shall search them, and finding what we shall find—ill will it go with thee. Keep guard thou, lance-pesade, over all here 'till we return," and with the word they left the hall into which all the household were collected, and for two hours or more they were heard searching every room and stair, and landing-place of the large rambling edifice—sounding the panels with their musket butts, thrust-

ing their broadswords into every crevice, but evidently finding nothing to justify their violent intrusion. At length re-entering, they strictly questioned the old servants, from whom, however, nothing was elicted, except that their mistress had gone forth with the boat alone, and had returned alone by the water-gate two hours since.

Then came the lady's turn, and, though with something more of delicacy and restraint, she, too, was very narrowly examined. The story which she told, being the literal truth, except that she omitted to say anything about the cavalier, and corresponding exactly with the narrative of the servants, produced a very visible effect upon the hearers, who, having searched all the outhouses and stables, and every nook and corner in the house without finding anything, and having in the first instance, intruded only upon a vague suspicion, began

to fear that they had got into a troublesome scrape.

After a pause, however, "The boat-house," exclaimed one, "the boat-house—we have not searched the boat-house! Bring all of them along—or, stay—bring Master Selby down, and his fair daughter, to the water-gate, and we will boat it over, they guiding us. Without, there, sergeant, move a guard round by the dam on the moat, to the boat house." The words were not well uttered before they were obeyed, and in ten minutes the whole party, consisting of the officers, with six stout troopers, were floating in the barge towards the boat-house. The face of the old man was stern and dark, and save of anger and resentment showed no emotion—nor did his daughter, though inwardly her whole frame shook with bitter and heart-rending anguish, suffer a single tremor to betray her

feminine terrors. The boat shot into the little cove, the torches threw their broad glare through the whole building, and there was nought to see.

"Here is a platform and a landing," cried the same youth who had proposed to search the boat-house, and who, with a strange pertinacity, persited still,—"let us ashore, for I doubt much we have him here"—and landing on the narrow rib whereon the little feet of Alice had trodden but a short while before, he strode with echoing tramp to the far end, and waving his torch round, discovered the entrance of the sail-loft.

"Ha! said I not so?" he exclaimed, exultingly—"said I not so? What have we up this trap, sweet Master Selby?"

"A sail-loft," answered he, very quietly —"a little place about a foot or two feet high, with some old oars in it—best search

it, sir—best search it; there may be a whole troop of cavaliers therein for aught I know against it."

Poor Alice set her teeth and drew her breath hard, and with a tremulous grasp clung to her father's arm as the puritan replied, "I will."

"Tush, man," his comrade interposed, "thou carriest caution to sheer folly—seest thou, there is no ladder—how should a man have mounted—or having mounted, how in God's name should he lie there?"

"They may have cut the ladder down, lest it should leave a clue. Be it as it may, I will assay it. Here, jump ashore you, Martin, and John Burney, hoist me into this trap, and pass me up a torch."

And in a moment, by their aid, he caught the edge of the trap with his hands, drawing his head and shoulders in, till he could hold himself up by his elbows; the torch

was then passed up to him, and he thrust it forward into the loft a little way.

"Well, Despard, what see you?" cried his comrade.

"Four old oars, and a roll of canvass," answered the disappointed soldier, tossing his torch into the water, and leaping down.

"I thought so," was the answer, and a loud burst of laughter from the Ironsides, who were tired out by the fruitless search, and eager to get back to quarters, drowned the convulsive sob which Alice could not master.

With brief and blunt excuse the troopers mounted and departed—the Hall was again quiet, and when they were left to themselves in the old library, Alice fell suddenly into her father's arms, and burst into a flood of weeping.

CHAPTER III.

It was long after the departure of the Ironsides, before the excited feelings of the fair girl were in the least degree composed; but gradually, when the harsh clank of their march, and the shrill clangor of their trumpet had subsided into absolute stillness, or rather into that soft and soothing mixture of natural and accustomed sounds, which, after the home ear has grown acquainted with their never-ending murmur, pass for entire silence—the violent fits of half-convulsive sobbing which had at first shaken

her whole frame, ceased, and the tears flowed in a quiet and unpainful stream. These, too, by slow degrees, diminished, and at last flowed no longer.

It was not grief, however, nor even sorrow that had called forth such strange and passionate emotions from that calm bosom; for the whole heart was full of deep and tranquil gratitude to Him, by whose good providence the interesting stranger had been preserved from his bloodthirsty enemies—much less was it all joy, for though there was a sense of happiness, or of a relief at least from terrible anxiety, springing up from the depth of her pure soul, yet there was nothing strong or passionate, nothing tumultuous in the character of that pure stilly pleasure. No, it was merely the reaction of a mind over-tensely strung during the last dread scenes. It had been only by an exertion almost too great for female

powers, that she had crushed down into her inmost soul all semblance of anxiety or interest during the search of the rude puritans; yet so completely had she crushed it down while in the presence of those stern inquisitors, that not only had she compelled her steps to be equal, and her hand steady, but she had actually forced her cheek and lip to retain their wonted colour, her eye its quiet undisturbed expression.

And well it was for that young stranger that she did so. For it was even less the grave, unmoved demeanour of the aged gentleman—less, the unconsciousness of the alarmed domestics—than the perfect tranquillity of that sweet and lovely maiden, which had convinced them that their searching longer would be but a vain labour. It had been some suspicion—vague indeed, and indefinite—that she might have concealed the cavalier, without the knowledge of the

household, by which the leaders of the party had been induced to search the boat-house; and therefore had they caused her to accompany them; that, if their doubts were true, some terror or expression of alarm might, as they judged inevitable, betray the secret of his hiding-place. And so far were they right, that it had only been by dint of almost superhuman fortitude that she forebore to scream aloud in the intensity of her excitement, when they persisted in examining the sail-loft, wherein, scarcely six inches from the torch of his pursuer, the object of her care lay hidden.

Excitement such as this, must end in a revulsion; and it was fortunate that there was cause enough apparent, to have disturbed the equilibrium of her mind, in the events which had transpired in the full sight of all—so that the outbreak of hysterical passion called forth no more alarm than

a mere fit of feminine terror, from the assiduous attendants who crowded round their beloved mistress with all the remedies of essences, strong waters, and the like, which their ignorant but kindly zeal could dictate.

Gradually, as we have said, however, her tears ceased to flow, and, as her mind regained its usual serene and balanced tenor, she recollected that there was yet much more to do, and much more cause than ever to avoid wakening suspicion. With her to see the right, and to perform it, were scarcely the results of a two-fold operation; and bidding her tire-woman await her coming in her own chamber, she dismissed all the rest; her father adding his injunction that as the hour of bed-time was long passed, they should not linger in the hall with idle gossipings, else there would be late rising in the morn. No more was said; but in those good old days, and in that orderly and peaceful household, there was no doubt that

his words would be obeyed, even to the letter. In a few moments the old gray-headed porter brought in the keys of the great gate and water-port, and laid them on the table by his master's hand, and before half an hour, except in old Marc's library, and in the chamber of his sweet child, there was not a light burning nor an eye unclosed, through the whole building.

Hours were early in those days, so that the clock had barely stricken ten when all the fires were quenched and lights extinguished. Eleven—twelve—one, followed—the deep sounds of the stable clock-house, solemn booming through the lonely night; and still the lamp burned steadily in the small library; and the two lighted windows might be seen above the court-yard wall, and through the foliage of the park plantations, even as far as the high road, had any one been watching them.

And one *was* watching them. The

younger of the puritan officers, wrapped in his scarlet watch-cloak, was standing on the platform of the fish-house, with a neigbouring farmer, dressed in his usual toil-worn garb beside him, and a stout trooper holding some five or six saddled chargers on the bridge.

Just as the clock struck one, the soldier stamped impatiently. "Doth the old hoary dotard keep watch thus always, till 'tis morning?" he exclaimed, turning toward the rustic.

"Ay, ay, sir," he replied, "ay'se warrant him. Measter Marc's a great scholar, ay've hard tell, and speaks all sorts of untold old-time tongues. And so you see he keeps a poring over a sight o' musty books night after night. Many's the time and often, when ay've been kept from home past common, at Worcester market or the like, ay've seen yon light in yon two selfsame windows,

while three o'clock o' the morning. And yet old man's astir with the cock, too—that's what does bother me like."

"See, see," the other interrupted him, "it has gone out."

"Ay, ay! Now we shall see it cross the next three windows to the right, and then if any one were watching the west end, he might see it a little while in the west gable. The old man's chamber's there, next to young mistress's bower."

While he yet spoke, the light, as of a candle or a lamp in motion, flitted across the three tall casements to the right, and disappearing, the southern front of the old hall was left in absolute darkness.

"Well! there it does go of a surety," replied the puritan, "and there *is* one to watch on the west end. Do they burn tapers all night through in their bed-chambers?"

"No, not a light is burnt in all the house, when the old measter's lamp is out; that's the last always—ever since I was a boy."

"Peradventure, then, we shall know more anon," returned the other, and then relapsed into silence; awaiting the arrival of his subordinate watchers. Nor had he very long to wait; for scarcely half-an-hour had gone by since the removal of the lamp, when nearly simultaneously three soldiers came up, though from different directions, and made their several reports all to the same effect, that not a mouse had stirred about the hall for three hours; and that now every candle was extinguished, and every soul abed for certain.

"Well, then, we have but lost our time; and they know nought about this same malignant, who 'scaped us here so strangely," muttered the officer between his clenched teeth. "Mount, men, mount, and away;

we'll beat these woods for many a mile to-morrow."

"Had you known the folks at the Hall, as I does, measter," the farmer interposed, "you never would have dreamed o' thinking that they did. Lord! sir, they are the scariest, timidest, ease-lovingest, people—they never trouble their heads about with no politics, nor parties."

"Well, well, good friend, it is no harm to be assured, and so good night to thee," the soldier answered, striking his spurs into his horse's flank, and galloping off, followed by his men, at a rate that soon left the quiet woods of Woolverton many a mile behind him.

"Good devil go with thee!" muttered the countryman as they rode off, "and with all like to thee, thou cheat and hypocrite! I trow now thou may be mistaken yet, for all thy cunning! If Mistress Alice had fell in

with the poor youth, I warrant me she would have hid him somehow, in spite all danger! So I'll away up to the Hall to-morrow, and see about it, for if so be, there be aught i' the wind, ay'se have a finger in it, or my name beant John Sherlock."

Times of great peril and emergency have not unfrequently been known to impart a species of instinctive and instantaneous shrewdness to minds not previously remarkable for any such quality. Bookmen, and grave secluded scholars, intuitively, as it were, under the pressure of great present peril or necessity, have been known to attain the skill of practised generals, the craftiness of the most subtle partisans. So it was in this instance with Marc Selby. Born of an old and honourable family, a second son, he had been educated many long years before with a view to taking orders; and the grave tastes and habits

which he had then acquired, clung to him afterward, when, by his brother's death—who fell at Zutphen, fighting by Sir Philip Sidney's side—he became heir of Woolverton; and, of course, with his altered fortunes, abandoned the profession to which he had before been destined.

Never, during his earliest and gayest youth, had he been a frequenter of courts, or even an associate in the daring field-sports or jovial festivities of the neighbouring gentry. Long after his succession to the family estate, when he was far advanced already in the vale of years, he had taken to wife the daughter of a baronet, whose estates paired with Woolverton—a fair and lovely creature, whose living type we have beheld in Alice. Her he lost young, after having followed to the grave two sons, his first-born; the infant Alice being left alone to his paternal care. Thus situate, more

gloomy every day had waxed the aged widower's abode—more ineradically were those bookworm habits fixed—till Alice, from a sweet prattling child, the licensed interruptor of her father's musings, had grown up to be the pure and lovely thing she was, when the occurrences fell out which it is ours to narrate.

Rarely was old Marc Selby seen abroad by any—rarely at home, save by the members of his own quiet household—no scenes of broil, or riot, or warfare had ever been beheld by him, much less had he been an actor in any such. Yet had he read, and mused, and dreamed—that he could have performed the deeds, and undergone the woes, and braved the terrors which his loved heroes of historic lore had done, and borne, and braved, undaunted—and now in his old age was he tried—tried and not then found wanting.

After his daughter had retired to rest,

he had conceived it very likely that some—as indeed was the case—of the Puritans might yet linger on the watch without, and that any deviation from the wonted customs of his household would certainly create suspicion. Before she went, he had promised Alice himself to rouse her from her slumbers, if any slumber she might take, when the time should arrive for admitting the young Royalist to a more safe retreat than that which he now occupied; and after she was gone, though anxious and excited, he sat down to his books, not at the first without an effort; but after he had sat some time, he returned to his ordinary frame of mind, and read, and pondered, and made notes, until the period should arrive, apparently, and indeed *really*, as fully engrossed in his subject, as though no graver matter than the full force of the particle τέ had occupied his meditations.

It would, however, have been worthy of

remark, to those who make the human mind their study, that while his understanding was devoted altogether to the unravelling of an obscure passage in one of Pindar's darkest Pythian odes, to which he had turned in the hopes of gleaning thence some light whereby to see into the depths of some yet deeper classic mystery, he was still quite awake to all the exigencies and the perils of his immediate position. Had he not been indeed fully aware of the necessity of being tranquil, it had not, perhaps, been within his power so calmly to have followed his accustomed studies. Had he not been a student, it would, perhaps, have frustrated his utmost coolness so to have waited the event. Yet was the result of the strange mixture—the blending of the feelings of the scholar and the man—simple although they were, untaught and natural—the most complete and perfect skill, and craft and subtlety, that

ever graced the wariest and most wily partisan.

When the lamp was extinguished in the library, and the hand-taper cast its flickering light, as witnessed by the wakeful Puritans, across the lattices of the less frequented apartments, the old man had, indeed, retired to his chamber, and when there, had at once cast himself into a huge arm-chair, where he reclined for many minutes absorbed in the deepest mental meditation.

After a while he started up, and for a moment it was his thoughts to pass directly to his daughter's chamber, but in an instant, and he scarce knew why, his mind was altered; for he had little thought that any were still in ambuscade without, watching his every movement—and he stood quietly before the casements, with the bright lamp behind him, casting his shadow on the wide illuminated panes. He threw his dress aside,

put out the light, and cast himself down heavily upon the bed. And there were those upon the watch who saw all this, albeit he knew it not, and testified thereto in after days, and it was well for him he did so.

After a space of deep and almost painful meditation, he once again rose. The moon was shining clearly, as she waded with uncertain gleams among the scattered clouds, through the tall latticed casements; and there was light enough, that the old man could find his scattered garments, and attire himself without the need of kindling any lamp. Once dressed, he opened his door carefully, but without any fear, for the domestics slept far from the inhabited apartments of the hall, and took his way through the old well-known passages directly to his daughter's chamber. The rays fell misty and dim through the stained windows as he

passed, and many an indistinct and fleeting shadow wavered across his path, as he went onward; but in too deep a school of philosophic thought had he been trained to cast a single thought to superstitious tremors, and student though he was, he had too deeply proved life's stern realities to blench for any shadow.

He reached the fair girl's chamber, and entered all unsummoned — and the same bright pure lustre, which had enabled him to don his dress without the aid of lamp or taper, was pouring upon her virgin couch, as she lay all disrobed and tranquil, but thoughtful, and awake, and full of her high purpose, as she awaited the appointed time.

"Father," she whispered, in soft but untrembling accents, as his hand touched the latch. "Father, is't thou? then tarry but for a little moment's space without, and I will join thee;" and with the words, she too arose.

And hastily, but yet completely, she attired herself in plain dark garments of simple country fashion; and ere ten minutes had elapsed she stood beside him, silent, in the dark corridor.

"Now to the library!" he whispered, and with slow faltering steps they groped their way through the large, vacant, lonely rooms, and reached it at last, breathless and panting—not from the speed at which they had advanced, but that they had scarce drawn a full breath since they left her chamber. Once there, a feeble glimmering light shone in, transversely and reflected—for the moon's rays touched not the southern front—and they were able to distinguish things, though indistinctly.

"So far," the old man whispered, "so far all's well. No living ear has heard that we are stirring, and if you lack not courage to finish out what you have well begun, there

is no more of danger. But look you, we have need of caution. No door must be unlocked—no foot must tread the staircase. I have a silken ladder here, framed long ago against emergency of fire—I will let it down from this casement under the shadow of yon tree—by it you must descend—creep through the garden greens, avoiding the bright court—enter the water tower; and making there your signal, admit your guest with your own hands. By the same path you must return together. I will await you here—hence opens, as you know, the passage. Have you the courage, girl?"

"Lower the ladder, father," she answered in a whisper; "lower the ladder and give me the keys!"

"So brave," he said, half musingly; "so brave, and yet so young!" and he paused long, and shook his hoary head, and seemed to hesitate, but then—"Well! well!" he said.

"Well! well! God's hand I trow is in it—and on it be his benison;" and without further words, after a little groping in the dark, he drew out the rope ladder he had mentioned, and lowered it from the extreme west window, across which fell the broad and massy shadow cast by the largest of the trees which we have named above. He handed her the key, pressed her with a long lingering pressure to his bosom, and printed one kiss on her brow. "The God of mercy go with thee, my child," he said, "for that thine errand is of mercy."

Another moment and she had passed the window-sill, and with a firm step, and untrembling although delicate hold, she trod the shaking rungs, and stood in safety at the bottom. For one short second more the old man's eye could follow her threading the mazes of the labyrinthine shrubs—then she was lost, and in a moment more had entered

the untenanted and lonely water tower. It was all dark as a wolf's mouth, save where one faint and broken ray fell through the embrasure, half intercepted by the breach of the huge gun; yet cool in every movement, and collected, she felt her way down the rude steps, unlocked the inner gate, and half raised the portcullis by aid of the complicated winch which moved it in the groove of stone wherein it traversed.

Retracing instantly her steps, after some minutes spent in search, she found the porter's tinderbox and link. She struck a light, and for a second's space the red light shot out through the lattice; yet so low did it strike, that a spectator, standing ten yards beyond the moat's south bank, could have seen nought of it. She blew it out, and counted ten, and lit it once again—and so on 'till the third time—and as she blew it out, a slight splash reached her ears, and in

a moment after a wary movement of the water, and a deep panting breath—and she received him at the steps, and led him upward to the embrasure, and lowered the portcullis once again, and locked the gate, and thrust the key into her girdle.

"Be silent, for your life," she whispered, as speedily she led him on through the low postern gate into the garden—but when she reached the open air, it flashed upon her mind that she had not replaced the half-burned flambeau with its appropriate flint and steel, in the same niche where it lay when she found it; and laying her finger on her lip, as they two stood in the half shadow of the twilight garden, she tripped back, and placed it rightly, so to avoid suspicion. Quickly they traced the shrubbery paths, and reached the pendent ladder; one signal, and he climbed it; and scarcely was he well landed in the library, before she too was in the room.

"Not a word, sir, not a word!" exclaimed Marc Selby, in one of those sharp whispers which fill the ear far more than the deep roar of ordnance. "Not a word, if you would not betray your rescuer!"

And they three stood there silent, in the pervading hush of deep awe, and yet deeper feeling; while the old man drew in the ladder, and laid it by in its accustomed place, and closed the latticed window. Then, after seeking about yet another while, he drew forth from a drawer in an old cabinet, a small old-fashioned lamp, with flint and steel and matches—a flask of wine, or cordial, and a strangely-shaped brazen key. Giving all these to the young cavalier, he turned to a compartment of the library wall, covered by shelves well stored with ponderous books, drew out one folio volume, and turned an iron button, replaced it, and pulled forth another, pressed a spring this way, and turned a screw-head that, and the whole

bookcase, with its load, from floor to ceiling, revolved upon a pivot, disclosing the bare plastered wall, with a small low-browed arch, descending, as it seemed, into the outer wall, and full of black impenetrable darkness.

"Alice," the old man said, "to bed! we will speak more to-morrow—pass in, sir!" and the girl left the room, and hurried to her chamber with a glad but quick-throbbing heart; and the stranger entered the dark passage, and old Marc Selby followed him, and drew the concealed door, masked by the ponderous book-shelves, after him; and the old library was tenantless again, and not a soul could have suspected, though he had searched it for a month, that private passage. But when they stood within it, the old man struck a light, and lit the lamp, and raised it to the face of his new guest, and gazed into his features as though he would

have read his soul. "Ha!" he said, "ha!" and paused again a little while, and then added, "Be it so. I will trust you!" and no word passed between them more, for the old man almost angrily imposed strict silence when the stranger would have spoken.

And far he led him, by long and winding corridors, delved through the thickness of the wall, up stairs and down, till he had brought him to a low dark vault, scarce six feet perpendicular height, by twelve in circuit, in which stood a table of dark oak, an old arm-chair, two or three stools of the same plain material, and a low pallet bed, heaped high with blankets, and soft coverlets, and sheets of snowy whiteness. Besides these articles of furniture, the gloomy chamber contained nothing but a few shelves in one corner, whereon were piled two or three pewter platters, an earthen bowl and pitcher, a saltcellar, a knifecase, a cruise of oil, and

four tall Venice wineglasses. There was no carpet on the floor, nor any hangings on the bare plastered walls—nor was there any window or even shothole whereat a single ray of blessed daylight could peer in to cheer the sad soul of the inmate. As if to compensate, however, for this want, there were no less than three doors beside that which had admitted them, massive and steel-clenched, and secured by bolts of singular device, and bars, and chains of iron.

"This is a poor abode, young sir," said Selby, as he set down the lamp upon the table; "but it is safe at least, and that to one in your condition is something always. No person now alive, save Alice and myself, knows the existence of this hiding place, much less the ways that lead to it; and you, before you quit it, must swear by all that men hold holy never by word or deed, by sign or hint or writing, to reveal it. Meantime, here

will we shelter you until such time as we may send you forth in safety. Food shall be brought you daily, and light, and change of raiment, and, if you wish it, books—but on society you must not count, not even on ours, for carefully we must eschew suspicion. Before I leave you to repose, one other secret of your dwelling-place I must disclose to you." He opened as he spoke another door, and showed a narrow stairway, winding, as it seemed, downward into interminable gloom.

"At the foot of these steps," he said, pointing through the opening, "you will find what appears a square well of water, and by it a trap-door; the first will furnish you the means of cleanliness and comfort, and by the latter you may cast into the moat, nightly, the remnants of your food, and aught else that, if discovered here, in case of any search, might cause suspicion. On no ac-

count, however, enter the well to bathe; for *it were certain death*, unless you knew the secret. Be careful when you pass those stairs to do it very silently—here you cannot be heard, though you should sing or whistle —there it were perilous indeed! The other doors lead elsewhere, and are locked. Let me know now who is my guest; and pledge me, as a soldier and a gentleman, your word of honour not to leave this apartment, except by the door I have shewn you leading to the water. You would risk all our lives by wandering about the corridors."

"My name is Wyvil—Marmaduke Wyvil, of Allerton Mauleverer, in Yorkshire, serving till yesterday as captain in my good friend and kinsman, Sir Philip Musgrave's, regiment of horse—not ten of whom now hold together—not fifty of whom now are numbered with the living. Alas! for thee, my friend, my more than brother—good,

gallant, murthered Musgrave! Alas! for the good cause that is a cause no longer!" and as he said the words, he wrung his hands till the blood started from the finger-nails, and burst into a paroxysm of violent sobs, and weeping. In a few minutes, however, he recovered himself somewhat; and mastering his passion as it seemed by a strong effort, "Pardon me," he said, "this is unmanly, very weak and trivial—but I am weak from weariness and watching, and from the lack of food—pardon me, I beseech you, my kind host and preserver."

"That can I not do, my young friend," returned the other, "seeing that there is nought to pardon. The cause, you speak of, I respect and love; and had there been less years upon my head, should have armed for it. Your feelings for your lost friend I honour—we will talk more to-morrow! Meantime throw off your dripping gar-

ments, drink me a cup or two of this sovereign cordial, stretch yourself on your humble bed, and after one night's safe and peaceful sleep, I warrant me I find you a new man in the morning."

He had already trimmed and lighted a brazen lamp which stood upon the board, and now reached down two glasses, filling them to the brim from the long-necked flask he had brought with him.

"I drink," he then said, "I drink, Captain Wyvil, to your good repose, and leave you to it straightway. Lock the door after me when I go forth, and open it not, save for my voice or that of Alice. No thanks, my friends, no thanks! Now God be with you, and farewell!" and without suffering him to answer, he shook his young guest warmly by the hand and left him.

CHAPTER IV.

A little more than a mile's distance from Woolverton Hall, not situated, however, on the Worcester turnpike, but on another road passing the principal entrance of the park, and forming its northern boundary, stood a small wayside inn, deeply embosomed in the woodlands which at the period of our narrative overspread many a mile of that fair country. This road, which entered the main turnpike some three miles to the eastward of the hall, was one of those innumerable country tracks which

traverse all the agricultural parts of England, winding about with no regard whatever to the space occupied, or the needless miles included in their sinuosities, wandering "like rivers at their own sweet will," and affording the only means of communication to the inhabitants of many a sequestered hamlet, many a lonely grange, devious, indeed, and long, but all-sufficient to the simple wants of the people, and full in themselves of picturesque and rural beauty. Its narrow wheeltrack was bordered on each hand by many yards of greensward—tall straggling hawthorn hedges overrun by the honeysuckles, and the flaunting streamers of the dog-rose, shaded it from the morning and the evening sunbeams; while overhead it was so thickly canopied by elm and ash and many a giant oak, that scarce a ray could penetrate the shadowy foliage at high noon. So seldom, too, did the road run

any distance in a direct straight line, that spots were rare indeed where the eye of a traveller could see a hundred yards before him.

It was upon this winding lane, in preference to the broad and dusty turnpike, that the gates of the hall, consisting of a low massive arch of antique brickwork, between two short and stubborn-looking towers, now so completely mantled with dark ivy that the very outlines of their form were lost, had been placed by the original founder; and it was at about a mile's distance from these toward the west, and consequently so much the farther from the highway, that "The Stag's Head," for such was the well-known sign of the little hostelrie, invited passers-by to take its humming ale and stores of rustic cheer.

It was a quaint and curious building that old inn, consisting of a long front of

a single story, with three projecting gables, one in the centre and one at either end, protruding some six feet into the road, and having the upper stories, which were in each, entirely occupied by a large latticed window of four or five compartments, again thrust forward about the same distance in advance of their bases. Below the window in the central gable was a wide low-browed doorway—or porch rather—of black oak, with the weather-bleached skull and broad-branched antlers of a huge red deer nailed above it, and a long bench on either side within. The two end gables and the flat fronts between them shewed several lattices, but of irregular heights and sizes, all neatly curtained with white dimity, and decked with pots of lavender, balm, rosemary, and other savoury herbs to gratify the smell or tempt the dainty palate.

A thick thatched roof, all green with

moss and lichens and masses of the yellow flowering stonecrop, with far-projecting eaves whence hung in clusters the clay-built cradles of the summer-loving martlet, covered the whole of this hospitable mansion—which was built of vast beams of jet-black oak, curiously interlaced one with another, the interstices being filled with neatly white-washed plaster—and afforded a pleasant haunt to a score or two of plump, purple-necked pigeons strutting to and fro from morning till night on the ridge-pole, filling the whole air with their hoarse love-making, or wheeling in short flights about their happy home.

In front of this truly rustic inn the road expanded into a little bay or circle, with a small meadow of three or four acres at the utmost, fenced all around by deep plantations, facing the windows—while at the back the building actually abutted on the

park wall, and was securely sheltered by the tall ranks of its immemorial elm-trees. Along the palings of the meadows, moss-grown and old and weather-beaten like all about them, ran a long horse-trough, fed constantly and full from a rude aqueduct of hollow trunks by a bright and chrystal rill, which keeping it still brimming over in the hottest seasons danced out with a fresh gurgling sound at the lower end in a mimic waterfall and was soon lost to sight among the rich tall herbage which it supplied with its perennial moisture. But the chief boast and ornament of the Stag's Head was the enormous aged oak—so aged that, as wise men said, it was recorded for a bound mark in the pages of the Domesday book—which stood exactly in the middle of the little circle, its gnarled gray arms completely sheltering the space below, and its leaves rustling on the one extremity against the diamond-shaped

panes of the chamber-windows, and on the other, covering the horse-trough with their cool cave-like umbrage.

Around the trunk of this vegetable giant was built a range of comfortable seats with a high back, and arms dividing it, as it were, into separate compartments—like the boxes of a modern coffee-house—all framed of tortuous roots, and unbarked branches, and each compartment having a round table in the middle for the benefit of the rustic banqueters, who here were wont to solace themselves every evening after the heat and burden of the day's toil were over.

It must not be omitted that on a low artificial mound in the meadow there stood a lofty maypole, round which in those blithe days before the sullen morose puritans had clogged fair England with the curse of their black creed—before the happy peasantry were changed by the loud lies of artful dema-

gogues into a horde of bitter discontented politicians—the young folks of the parish would meet on many a spring or summer evening with merriment and music, to twine their May-wreaths from the abundant wild flowers, and at the sound of pipe and tabour present to the great architect of nature, an offering most grateful to divine beneficence —the offering of innocent, rejoicing, grateful hearts.

Alas! where are they now, those festive meetings?—where is the frolic mirth—the innocence too cheaply pleased with trifles—the love of music, the affection—most natural affection, and most indicative of pure and graceful spirits—for the sweet perfumes of the dewy flowers—the dance upon the greensward under the mellow eye of evening—the cheerful congregation in the old village church on every Sunday morn, including every inmate of the village, from the blind frail octogenarian to the wee

toddling prattler that sat grave-eyed and hushed in decent awe by its young comely mother? Where is the veneration for old age—the grateful reverence to the kind superiors—the love for the frank, free-spoken learned churchman, who preached not one iota the less wisely, nor prayed one tittle the less fervently, that he could chat with the old gossips by the fireside, and jest with the young lasses on the green, and wing an arrow to the clout with the featest yeoman in the ring? Where are they now, those one characteristics of the people of *once* merry England? Gone, one and all—gone to return no more.

Not then, however, had these things come to pass—although the events were even then in progress which sowed the seeds of what should be thereafter; and though throughout the land full many a furious fanatic had fulminated the dread wrath to come over the guilty dancers—licentious

worshippers of Baal circling like Moabitish women with flutes and timbrels round the high places of false gods—the maypoles were not yet entirely abandoned; and smiles were sometimes seen upon the faces, and songs heard from the lips of youths and maidens.

At a very early hour of the morning following the events narrated heretofore—almost indeed as soon as the sun was up—the Stag's Head saw collected under the old oak tree a group of people, some two or three of whom were waiting, as it would seem, for the first meal of the day; while the rest were for the most part countrymen pausing a moment on their way afield, to take their morning draught of ale, and hear the gossip of the times, or servants of the inn bustling about their hospitable duties. The country people soon passed onward, and the company when they were gone appeared to consist of four persons.

One was an old gray-headed man, spare-made and tall and bony, but pale, fresh-coloured, comely, and retaining still many signs of strength which in his younger days must have been more than usually great. He was dressed in a much-worn long coat of forest-green, with buckskin breeches, soiled and glazed at their knees, and long calf gaiters. A rabbit embroidered in tarnished silver on the sleeve of his coat, and a brace of rough wire-haired terriers, long-backed and short-legged—one of which was sleeping at his feet, while the other was making demonstrations most decidedly hostile against a comfortable-looking tabby cat inside the kitchen-window—seemed to designate his profession as that of warrener to some neighbouring gentleman; and this was confirmed more fully by the appearance of an old gray pony dozing in the shade, to whose wooden pack-saddle were attached

a bundle of nets, a spade, a bag, which from its constant and eccentric agitations seemed to contain a ferret, and a dozen or more of fine wild rabbits hanging by their heels across his withers, with the blood dripping—so freshly had they been killed—from their long silvery ears.

The second of the group, who sat by the old warrener, talking to him and laughing with a familiarity which showed as if they had been old acquaintances, was a man something past the middle age, dressed like an ordinary yeoman, though perhaps something better, in a suit of dark-coloured fustian, with a high broad-brimmed hat. His face without being actually good, was marked and striking—there was a keen quick twinkle of intelligence in his sharp black eyes, and an expression of sly cunning humour about the same feature, with a queer half-pleasant half-cynical smile constantly fluttering around his mouth.

His complexion was much tanned and sunburnt, as were his hands likewise, on one of which, the right, there was a long-seamed scar, as of a broadsword cut, which, having slightly grazed his fore and middle fingers, had completely severed the two others from the knuckles and terminated only at the wrist. His garments and his shoes were all powdered over with thick dust, as if he had travelled many miles; but there was nothing about him to indicate his business, unless it were a pedlar's pack, an ell wand of stout oak, rendered available as a weapon by a steel spear-head screwed into one end, and a flat wooden box with a broad belt of leather, all of which lay on the table of the box next to that in which he and the warrener was sitting, and which might, or might not, have been his property. The third and only remaining occupant of the seat beneath the tree was an athletic bronzed young fellow, with somewhat of a

dare-devil expression in his bright hazel eye, but a frank, cheerful and goodhumoured smile, clad as a forester or gamekeeper, with a bucktail in the silver band of his black velvet cap, and a badge on the sleeve of his green jerkin. A short rifle-gun, or musketoon, stood in the corner of the settle at his elbow, with its appurtenances of powder-horn and bullet-pouch lying upon the seat beside it, a long broad two-edged knife with a handsome buckhorn handle, thrust into his belt at the left side, completed his equipment.

There was yet a fourth person present—but he was not one of that party, nor was he one who had much part at any time in the companionship of men—he sat a little way aloof from the rest in a low wicker chair, placed where the morning sun fell full upon it—but he saw not, or at least noticed not, the glorious sun-light with the

innumerable living atoms wheeling and circling in its golden radiance—he only felt its warmth, and dozed, scarce conscious of the comfort it poured down upon him; a large well-formed and powerful lad of seventeen years or better, his muscular and shapely limbs giving the promise of vast strength to be developed ere he should have attained to the full years of manhood.

One glance, however, at his features told in an instant his whole melancholy tale—the low receding brow—the beadlike and unmeaning eye—the prominent mouth, thick-lipped, with teeth as white and strong as those of a wild beast, which had scarred all the lips around in the dread seizure of his convulsive paroxyms! He was an idiot of the worst and lowest grade, scarcely endowed with speech, so inarticulate were the sounds which alone his defective organs could produce—with instincts

scarcely equal to those of the inferior brutes, and amounting to little more than a sense and memory of wrongs or kindnesses, with an occasional gleam of desperate animal ferocity, and now and then—at rare, most rare and distant intervals, a burst of tender and affectionate feeling blended as it were with a partial revelation of deeper and more human thoughts within, than any thing in his external bearing could be held to indicate. During these partially lucid intervals it was remarkable moreover that all his powers seemed to expand proportionably — eye, tongue, expression, all aiding the development of thoughts, which, if they were at work continually in the depths of his shrouded mind, left at the least no tokens of their working upon the stagnant surface.

A large gaunt mastiff-bitch, now nearly toothless and grizzled over all her face,

slept close beside his feet, keeping nevertheless, as it would seem, a strict guard over her witless master, for ever—though she seemed to sleep—if he but moved a limb or drew a heavier breath than common, she would unclose an eye, and watch him for a moment with an expression almost human, and with a quick nervous quiver of her thin pendulous ears, till, as she saw him settle down again into his soulless musings, she too would relapse into her daylong slumbers.

"Holloa! my pretty Cicely—what ails thee, lass, this morning?" cried the young forester as the last of the peasants moved off. "Canst give us nought to break our fasts withal? Here's old John Brent's been out since four of the clock—and Master Bartram has walked all the way from Barrington, and that's ten miles, since daybreak—and here am I, Frank Norman,

not like to walk a mile—though I've got all my rounds before me, and that's *twenty*, good—till I've got cake and ale!"

"Coming! oh! coming—Master Frank," cried the smart country lass, running across the green with her short petticoats displaying her clean ankle and neat foot as they fluttered in the wind, and the bright ribbons in her cap paling beside the blush of her soft peachlike cheek. "You musn't flurry one so—you've just been and taken all my breath away—there! there's your ale—double ale too, six quarts of it, stirred with a sprig of rosemary and a nice roasted crab in it. And there's your glasses—and here's hot cakes and sweet fresh butter—and here comes Jenny with the rasher and the eggs, and I'll away to fetch the trenchers. Marry! will that do for you, Frank?"

"So nicely, Ciss, that I'll e'en pay

thee with a kiss when thou hast brought them."

"I won't go after them, then, saucebox—Welch Jenny here may fetch them you, and serve your table too! Marry come up! green jackets and bucktails must needs be scarcer sights than they be now in these parts, when pretty girls like me buy kisses of such chaps as thee for service."

And tossing her pretty little head coquettishly she tripped off into the porch, while with a loud and cheery laugh John Brent rallied his young comrade. "Hey! Norman, lad, she hit thee as clean as ever thou struck'st hart of grease."

"With headless shaft at roving distance!" the young man interrupted him; for he had caught a sly glance, and a wicked smile, cast over her shoulder as she disappeared, which contradicted quite the import of her words. "But come, let's try the ale!"

For some minutes' space after this they were so well employed, over the eggs and bacon that few words passed between them. While they were thus engaged, however, a fifth personage was added to their number. It was no other than John Sherlock, the stout yeoman whom the puritans had stopped the preceding night upon the Heronry bridge, while keeping watch over the inmates of the hall. He was a right good specimen of a fine blunt English farmer of the olden time, full six feet high and with a breadth of shoulder and a volume of muscles amply proportioned to his inches, clad in his snugly-fitting doublet of gray broadcloth, buff breeches and blue woollen hose, with heavy silver buckles in his strong ankle-shoes, and a clasp of the same metal to the band of his slouched beaver hat.

He came upon them suddenly—so much

so that, although on horseback, the others neither heard nor saw him till he was close beside them; for he came down the road behind them from the westward, as they sat looking down it toward the park gates, so that the body of the oak-tree was interposed between the new-comer and the party, and it was not, therefore, till he had well-nigh passed, that he perceived them. When he did so, however, the recognition was simultaneous.

"Ho! is it thou, John Sherlock?—best stop and take a horn."

"What! Norman, lad, how be you? and how be you John Brent?—good morrow, Master Bartram."

"Come—'light down, John, 'light down—wilt not?" said the forester. "But what's i' the wind now?" he continued, in accents that denoted no small wonder, as he looked more steadily at the good

yeoman. "Where, i' the fiend's name, didst get that beast, thou straddlest so gallantly?"

And well indeed might he ask and admire—for in sooth it was no sober cart-pad that bore the jolly farmer, nor yet was it his own high-bred and powerful hunter,—for he was well to do in the world, and turned out now and then with the earl's stag-hounds, and followed them as close as squire or knight or baron,—but a tall jet-black barb of Dongola, clean limbed, with a coat bright and soft as satin, and a broad flashing eye, and a full nostril. The head-stall of his bridle was all adorned and studded, as were the bits, the poitrel, and the crupper, with knobs and bosses of chased gold; the housings and the padding of his demipique were of rich velvet laid down with gold embroideries of full three inches depth, while to match the colour

of the saddle-cloth his flowing mane was gathered up and plaited with blue ribbons.

"By George, but that's a baron's charger at the least on't!" exclaimed old Brent. "'Light down, 'light thee down, Master Sherlock, and tell us all about it."

"Nay! I've got nought to tell"—returned the farmer, alighting, however, as he was requested, and giving the rein to an old half-palsied hostler, who had tottered out at the sound of the horse-tramp. I've got no great matter to tell you. I found t' nag down i' the Hefonry wood tied to a young ash sapling. I was a passing by like, when I heard him nickering and neighing a mile off or better. And there he had been all night for certain, for t' dew was on t' saddle, and all quite white on his long mane and tail. I took him up to my own stable, and made the lads sort him down. Some gentleman on the king's side

has owned him, that got off from Worcester fight, I reckon."

"Ay, ay!" responded all the listeners. "I warrant me."

But John Brent went on speaking—"Ah! *he's* owned him, I'll be bail, as they red-coated roundheads was a looking arter, down at the hall last night."

"What's that—what's that?—down at the hall?—tell us, John Brent—tell us man! what i' the fiend's name are you thinking on, to tell us nought about it before this?"—cried the young forester, starting to his feet and snatching up his musketoon. "Did they trouble Master Selby—did they *dare* harm fair Mistress Alice?"

"No! no! no wrong, Frank Norman—thou need'st not be so hot upon't, lad," answered the old warrener;—"they did *scare* Mistress Alice woundily; but no harm done. You see they had chased

some gentleman clear down from Worcester field, and fired at him from the top of Longmire hill, and lost all track of him, as it was growing dark, down in the bottom by the bridge. And so they came, and searched the old hall from the garrets down —but, Lord, he wasn't there; not he! Old master'd been in's study, Jeremy says, all day—and Mistress Alice came in from the park about an hour or so afore the supper, and no one with her any how; for Jeremy he let her in at the water-gate, and Charles and Launcelot were with him; and they say nobody came in with her—no Christian any ways—except old Talbot! —and so they went their ways, arter they'd got done searching."

"The devil's luck go with them," added young Norman, playing with the trigger of his gun-lock; "there'll be no peace in England any more till the rogue round-

heads are put down, and our good king enjoys his own again!"

"Ay! ay! that's right," chimed in the pedler Bartram. "Heaven send the rogues well down! A yard or two of Holland's linen, and a commodity of Scottish serge-cloth, and old calf-leather, is all the merchandise they need. Their very wenches won't wear a tester or a top-knot. Heaven send them down, and we'll have jolly times again. But now nought's doing—and for fine Flanders' lace, and Genoa velvets, and Cyprus lawns, and soft French taffetas, I'm fain to sell old sermons and stale psalm-tunes and such rubbish! But that has been a noble's horse, I warrant him—why that's all solid gold upon the trappings; and that gold lace is worth ten crowns the Flemish ell, and that velvet's all prime Genoa. He's a lord's horse, at least! What do you mean to make with him, hey, Master Sherlock?"

"Why you see, lads," said Sherlock, "the soldiers stopped me on the bridge last night, of this same party that searched Woolverton — they watched about the house till it was nigh-hand two o'clock, and all the lights was out, and they asked me a sight of questions—but nothing seemed a stirring, and they couldn't scent out any thing; and so they went off to their quarters. But I heard them talk, you see; and guessed, by what they told, that he had took to the woods; and I went off betimes this morning, to see if I could see the gentleman, and show him where to hide away. By what they talked he'd been a prime one!—fought to the very last by the king's side at Worcester, and when their pickets came upon him in a barn-yard, somewhere nigh-hand the field, where he had hid himself the first night, he shot two of them with his pistols — they're dis-

charged sure enough"—and, as he spoke, he drew two large gold-mounted pistols from the holsters, with the hammers down and the pans black with smoke—"and charged clean through their troop, cutting down one, and wounding two more badly! And so I found his horse, but couldn't hit upon no track of him at all; and then I thought I'd best go down to the hall, and talk with Master Selby, and he'd be telling me what I should do with him."

"That's right, John," said the warrener. "I'm going home myself now with these rabbits—Andrew, cook, wants them for a pie, I reckon. Bartram you'd best step up, man, with your packs—young mistress will buy, like enow."

"Well, I don't know but what I had," returned the pedler, shouldering, as he spoke, his box and bales, and grasping his ell-wand; "but we must pay the reckoning first."

"No! no! that's mine," said Norman. "The score's mine, this time, any how; when we next meet you'll stand the treat for us, Bartram. I'll in, and pay it up now. And then I've got to tramp clean round by Reardon forest, and Low Moor, and down by the Hagard mere to Harlewood's and Burford Old-lane-end, and so home by the Ringwoods and the Goshawk dingle. I would I might fall in with the young cavalier. Well, good den, boys," and, throwing his pouch and horn across his shoulders, he caught up his gun and was turning to the house, when the arrival of a mounted party, making itself heard a minute at least before it came into sight, by its clang and clatter, arrested all their plans in a moment.

CHAPTER V.

THE new-comers as it appeared in a few moments, were no less than a patrolling party of the Ironsides, consisting of eight privates with their lancepesade or corporal, and a subaltern officer—a lieutenant, or cornet more probably—commanding them. Like all the splendid corps of which these soldiers formed a part, they were picked men, and nothing could be more soldier-like or perfect in its way than their whole bearing and appointment. There was nothing superfluous—nothing tawdry or

tinselly—nothing defective, much less mean about them. The strong high-bred black horses, which they rode, were accurately groomed and in superb condition, while all their furniture of plain black leather, mounted with polished steel showed the severe rigorous discipline of the regiment by its exact unsullied brightness.

The men were uniformly clad in scarlet doublets, with low pot helmets of brightly-burnished steel—the most efficient and least cumbrous head-piece that has ever been invented—and musket-proof cuirasses; the tablets on their thighs being of lighter substance, though of the same clear and highly-tempered material. Heavy jack-boots with glittering spurs, buff breeches, and stout leather gauntlets extending almost to the elbow completed their uniform; while for offensive arms each soldier carried a long straight two-edged broadsword,

a brace of pistols at his holsters nearly two feet in length, and a short heavy musketoon slung over his left shoulder, and by the bandoleers containing his ammunition.

There was not a particle of embroidery or lace upon the doublets of the men, nor any distinctive mark in the uniform of the lancepesade or of the cornet—except that the former had a short scarlet tuft, and the latter a red feather in his morion. They came up at a brisk hand-gallop in double file, the non-commissioned officer leading them, and the subaltern in the rear; but as they entered the little green, before the door of the Stag's Head, the cornet set spurs to his horse, and coming up to the head of the column, wheeled them into a single line, closing in on both sides the tree, and surrounding the little group between the inn door and the semicircle of his troopers.

"Halt! Ho!" he shouted, "and you, sirs,

stand all, and show your names and business, if ye be honest men.—Ha!" he continued in a harsher and more insolent tone, as his eye fell upon Sherlock and the noble charger, which he had but that moment remounted —"Ha! what sort of knave have we here? —what do you with this war-horse? Verily I do believe, Elisha Burnett, the dog is leading him out even now to mount that same malignant, who 'scaped so strangely from us yester even. Doubtless he is even now within. Unsling your firelocks—prime, load, and make ready!—and now thou most base knave and dog," he went on addressing Sherlock, when his orders had been complied with by the party he commanded, "why dost thou not speak out?"

"I've had no chance to speak," responded Sherlock doggedly enough, for he was not well pleased by the tone or manner of his questioner,—"I've had no chance to speak,

unless I interrupted you; and in the next place, for that matter, I've yet to learn what you would have me tell you."

"Who are you, dog, that bandy words with me?"

"No dog, sir," answered the other, "but an independent English yeoman—a peaceful and a loyal subject, troubling no man, and living on mine own land, which lies in this same parish, my name is John Sherlock, pretty well known in these parts, ay! and in Worcester too!"

"Ha! thou art he I did speak with last night upon the bridge? Verily, John, verily, I misdoubt thee very grievously, my mind misgives me, that thou didst lie unto us this past night, and that thou art in league with this malignant—speak out where is the traitor—see that thou answer truly; else, as my soul liveth in the fear of the Lord alway, so surely shalt thou die the death."

"Of the owner of the horse," answered the honest yeoman whose face had flushed exceedingly red at the imputation of the lie, "I know no more than thou dost—nor so much as thou dost either—for thou hast seen him, which I never have, I trow. The horse I found tied to a ground-ash in what we call the Heronry wood, within a gunshot of the bridge where you were on the watch last night."

"Oh! thou didst—didst thou—and what makest thou with him here, on this by-lane?—Mark his words corporal—Whither wert taking him?"

"To Master Selby's, at the hall, to ask him what I had best do with him," was the immediate answer; "and I am on this lane, because it happens to be the nighest road to the hall gates."

"And why to Master Selby's, knave?—see that thou palter not."

"Because he is my landlord, and my right good friend, and kind master—and the wisest man too, and the best scholar for miles round. Why all the plain folks here-away go for good counsel to Master Selby, when they need it."

"A very palpable lie!" replied the puritan. "But now thou didst tell me that thou didst dwell on thine own land—and now thou dost avouch this dreaming dotard to be thy landlord and thy master. Down from the charger, dog!—down with thee in quick time!—pitch him off if he loiter, lance-pesade."

"There'd go two words or more to that same bargain," answered John, dismounting slowly, "if you were alone my gay lad! For, spite your toasting-fork and popguns, I'd find you work with a stout arm and a good crab-tree staff—and make your tin pot there ring, that it should fancy itself in the

tinkers hand again. A man can't own one farm, I trow, and rent another of his landlord—hey, master officer? I'd not get down now neither, but that the nag is none of mine, nor I don't want him!"

"Ha, ha!—well said, John Sherlock—well said, mine old friend! and if thou need'st a backer, count upon me for one!" exclaimed Frank Norman the forester, with a hearty laugh, who had listened with much disgust to the insolence of the puritan soldier.

"Ha! lancepesade, link bridles, and dismount your men, and seize me these malignants." A momentary bustle followed, during which Norman coolly loosened his whittle in his sheath, and very deliberately cocking his musketoon levelled it full at the head of the speaker.

"The first man of you," he said, speaking through his set teeth with extreme firmness, "that stirs one step to lay a hand on me—an ounce ball's in your leader's brain-pan."

"Who art thou, that darest thus resist lawful superiors?" asked the cornet, to do him justice, not apparently alarmed by the threat, which the other stood evidently prepared to execute.

"Frank Norman," was the ready answer, "head forester, and wood ranger, to Lord Ferdinando Fairfax, on his estate and manor here of Oaklands. So put that in your pipe and smoke it, master cornet, after you have laid the strong hand on the Lord General's servitor!"

"Hold your hands, lancepesade," cried he, turning very pale at the announcement, "this is an error all. He is an honest fellow, doubtless, though somewhat malapert. Hold your hands all! Is the Lord Fairfax at the manor now—how called you it—or at his lands in Yorkshire?"

"He is at Oaklands," answered the forrester, lowering his rifle as he saw that no

violence would be offered to him, "he came from the north three weeks since, if it concerns you any thing to know."

"Well, well, good fellow, be not, I prithee, sullen—no evil has been done, nor any meant, I trow. Thou mayest go hence, I have no call with thee."

"But I have a call here," muttered Frank, "and so I'll even tarry."

"Well, be it so then. Lancepesade, look to that fellow Sherlock, that he escape not—guard him, but harm him not—while I look to these others." And as he finished speaking he leaped down from his horse, and strode up to the old warrener.

"Now, sir, whose knave art thou, and what dost thou here?"

"No one's knave," answered old Brent, "but Squire Marc Selby's warrener, for these last score of years."

"Ha! and thou—marry thou art a pesti-

lent-looking thief—a spy of the malignants, I'll be sworn," addressing the pedler, on whose full bags the Ironsides had been for some time casting greedy glances.

"Not so, most noble sir; not so, most valiant captain," replied that worthy, in a strange sanctimonious snuffle, widely at variance with his quick keen eye, and somewhat roving air. "A poor, but honest pedler—licensed by the most worshipful house of parliament—trafficking in a poor way, fair sir—a very small poor way; and judging it a gain alway, I do profess it in the sight of heaven—a gain not carnal, nor pertaining to mere worldly lucre, but a great gain to the immortal soul, if I can spoil somewhat in the way of trade these over-proud Egyptians—the malignants—even as excellent Moses despoiled Pharaoh, and his court. Verily, yea! indeed, if it be but a few poor pennies on the ell measure, it is still somewhat!"

A grim smile curled the lip of one or two of the soldiers at this outburst; but nothing could exceed the entertainment of the young forester, manifested by a stentorian roar of laughter, which burst as it were irrepressibly from his lungs, till the tears fairly rolled down his sunburnt cheeks, at the pedler's ludicrous and somewhat overstrained imitation of the puritanic snuffle. With no friendly eye did the officer regard his mirth; nor was he in the least persuaded by the pedler's eloquence.

"Show me thy licence, sirrah! I do misdoubt thee yet, for all thy seeming honesty! Surely 'tis no rare thing for the wolves nowadays to don the sheep's clothing. Show me thy licence. Well, it is right, I see," he added, after a pause; "but I shall search thy pack before I let thee go, I promise thee. Now, lancepesade, take three of your best men, bring all the women-folk together into one place, and set a sentry over them;

but see they take no harm. Then search the hostelry from the cellar upward, and if ye find *him*, as well I wot ye will, tarry not to ask questions or make prisoners, but shoot him dead upon the instant, and hew his head off from his shoulders—there is a price set on it that will pay the labour. Thou, Anderson, picket the horses there beside the horse-trough. You, sirs, stand to your firelocks, and see that none of these stir hence, unless it be that fellow of Lord Fairfax' following.—Ha! who is this? I saw him not before," he continued, stepping up, as he spoke, toward the idiot boy. "Who art thou?"

"He is an idiot lad!" said Sherlock, speaking very quickly; "witless, and almost speechless, from his cradle. He cannot answer thee if he would. Vex him not if thou be a man!"

"Keep your breath, my good fellow, I

advise you," retorted the other, "for your own porridge, which you'll find hot enough anon, I deem it very probable; and you, sir, answer me straightway, if you would avoid the strapado!"

And with the words he laid his hand roughly on the poor idiot's shoulder, who glared up into his face with an unmeaning vacant stare, but answered not a word. "Speak, sirrah fool!" exclaimed the other brutally, giving him at the same time a slight shake; but at that moment the old mastiff bitch, which had slept without moving during all that had passed heretofore, but had roused herself up as the soldier drew near her hapless trust, uttered a savage yell, and flew at his tormentor. But he, seeing at half a glance that she was toothless and quite impotent to do him any harm, drew back a little so as to give the utmost impetus to the blow, and kicked her in the

chest with the full swing of his heavy boot. Her furious yell was changed to a dolorous howl, as she rolled over and over, sprawling and struggling close to the feet of one of the privates, who, following up his officer's brutality by a piece of his own, instantly knocked her brains out with the iron-plated but of his heavy carbine.

A deep red flush crossed the bold features of the forester, and again left them pale as death, but he saw that it was useless to interfere, and that to do so might in fact only produce worse usage. Not so John Sherlock, who struggled so violently with the two Ironsides who held him, swearing and calling them by every vituperative and contemptuous term the cavaliers had applied to their party, that one of them gave him to understand that he should share the same fate as the mastiff, if he did not hold himself still on the instant.

But in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the whole expression of the idiot's face was changed—the unmeaning bead-like eyes glared with a strange unnatural fire—he champed his strong white teeth, till the foam flew from them like the froth churned from the angry tushes of a hunted boar—he sprang upon his feet, uttering a long protracted howl, more like the cry of some fierce and terrible wild beast than any voice of man; and brandishing his hands, contorted into the semblance of an eagle's talons, he seized the strong man by the throat, and nerved by the supernatural force of madness, throttled him till his face grew purple, and his breath rattled in his throat, and shook him to and fro as if he was the merest stripling in the hug of a practised athlete.

For a few seconds' space the men stood mute and motionless in consternation; but, roused to a perception of their officer's

danger,—for the boy still clung to him like an enraged tiger, giving vent to his fury all the while by the most appalling sounds that can be conceived to issue from a human throat—sounds terribly chorussed by the deep sobs and inarticulate ejaculations of the half-strangled soldier, and by the thrilling shrieks of the imprisoned women from within, —three almost simultaneously sprung forward. But as the foremost stretched out his hand to grasp the idiot, Norman advanced one pace with a swift stride, and shifting his rifle rapidly into his left hand, struck him a flush hit in the face with all the strength and quickness of a skilful boxer. Between the actual force of the blow, and the impetus with which the puritan rushed to meet it, the effect was tremendous. Headlong was the wretch hurled, as if he had been shot from some engine, with the blood spouting from eyes, nose, and mouth; and

when he struck the ground, with all his steel accoutrements clanging about him as he fell, he lay there prostrate and motionless, as if he had been killed upon the spot.

Almost at the same point of time in which Norman struck that hearty blow in his defence, the paróxysm of the idiot's attack was over. Relaxing his hold on the half-strangled puritan, he staggered backward, and sunk into his wicker chair in the rigid seizure of an epileptic fit, slavering fearfully through his grinded teeth, rolling his eyes upward till the whites alone were visible, and clenching his hands till the blood started from his palms under the pressure of his nails. As he did so, the other two privates, who had sprung forth in the first instance to release their officer, seeing him now freed from his assailant, rushed on the forester, and taking him entirely by surprise disarmed him ere he could use his rifle, and

bound his hands behind him with a sword-belt. At the same moment the corporal, with the three privates who had accompanied him, returned from their search, and announced it fruitless, for that there was clearly no person in the house except its usual inmates; and further, that they had found no signs of any recent visiter. While freed from the restraint of the sentry, the women ran out to the assistance of the wretched idiot, and carried him in, still altogether senseless and inanimate.

It was a little while before the cornet, by whose brutality the whole disturbance had been caused, recovered from the confusion into which the assault of the witless boy had thrown him; but when he did so, his face livid with all bad passions, and his cool malignant eye, proclaimed him dangerous, no less surely than did the first words he uttered.

"Lancepesade—draw up instantly three

file, tie the dog forester to yonder horsepost, and shoot him in two minutes, for an example to all treasonable brawlers. I'll teach him that to serve a lord, is no excuse for treason."

Not a shade paler did the cheek of the stout-hearted Norman grow, as he heard the full sentence, and saw the minions of the enemy clustering around him and preparing to carry into effect the atrocious mandate; nor did one muscle tremble in his sinewy frame, although he saw that no mere threat or mockery was intended, but that it was cold and stern reality without one hope of rescue. He did not speak a word, but his lips moved as he prayed fervently in silence.

"By God!" exclaimed John Sherlock, almost in a shout, as he looked on in impotent but furious indignation at the preparations for the murder of his friend. "By God! to see this, a man would think there was

no law in England — no justice under heaven!"

"Then would a man think most unwisely," answered a clear harmonious and well-pitched voice from behind the group, all of whose faces were turned either toward the house, or down the lane to the eastward— "Then would a man, I say, John Sherlock, think most unwisely. For there *are* laws in England, and while I am a magistrate there shall be justice too!"

The eyes of all were directed in an instant to the sound; and there, just at the entrance of the lane into the little green, upon a fine bay hunter, which he had just pulled up as he came suddenly, and most unexpectedly, upon the scene of such foul violence, sat the speaker. He was a fine-looking young man of eight or nine and twenty years, with a broad and ample forehead, from which a profusion of dark

chestnut-coloured hair fell off in loose and natural curls over the collar of his doublet, large clear gray eyes, and a set of features not in themselves so eminently handsome, as they were remarkable for their intellectual cast, and for the stamp of worth, and calm unaffected majesty which they wore, as if it were their every day accustomed garment, not a disguise assumed to suit occasions, and thrust at other times aside lest it should mar the aims, or clash with the pursuits of the wearer. In person he was broad-shouldered, and deep-chested, and long-limbed, and sat his horse with that easy grace which can be acquired only by long practice, and with something of a military air.

His dress was a complete riding-suit of fine pearl-coloured cloth, slightly but tastefully embroidered with silk of the same colour, high cavalry boots carefully polished,

and a broad-leafed hat of gray beaver with a silk hat-band fastened by a broad silver buckle, but without any feather or cockade. His sword, a handsome silver-hilted rapier in a steel scabbard, was girt about his waist by a rich scarf of silvery satin—presenting, with the aid of the snow-white linen and lace border of his Heemskirke cravat, a picture of the most graceful and finished neatness that can be imagined—although from the soberness of its colours and the absence of all tawdry ornament it was evident that the wearer belonged to the parliamentarian party which, was generally—and for the most part, it must be admitted, justly—stigmatized by the cavaliers as careless and ill-appointed, if not actually sordid, in appearance. There were holsters at his saddle-bow, and the butts of a pair of handsomely-mounted pistols showed that they were not there for mere show.

When he had spoken these few words in a voice and manner that accorded perfectly with the calm dignity of his demeanour, he rode slowly forward towards the house, followed by no less than six servant men dressed in plain liveries of dark drab cloth, superbly mounted on bay horses, and all well armed with sword and pistol, who drew out from the lane and quietly fell into line without any word given, but with a regular and business-like method, that showed very clearly that both men and horses had been accustomed to military manœuvres, and had performed not only on the holyday fields of practice, but under the hot fire of squadrons.

A bright smile played across the face of Norman, the moment that he heard the voice of the young gentleman, chasing away the shadows that had gathered there, even as the summer sunshine dispels the mist

that shrouds some striking landscape; and a still broader expression of delight gleamed out upon the sturdy lineaments of good John Sherlock. The others appeared indeed somewhat confused and disappointed at the interruption, but their commanding officer, seeing that his force was still superior to that of the new-comers, hastily ordering his men to fall in and look well to their carbines, walked forward a few steps, and said, addressing himself to the leader of the party with something more of respect than he had hitherto displayed to any person present, but still abruptly and almost rudely, "And pray, sir, who may you be, who talk so loudly about justice? I am Cornet Despard, at your service, of his excellency the Lord General Cromwell's own regiment of Ironsides; and if, as your words seem to show, you be in truth an admirer of justice, and you think well to tarry here some six or

seven minutes, then you are like to see it done upon as sturdy a knot of malignants as an honest man need light upon in one September day."

"I thank you for your information, Cornet Despard," returned the other, in the same cool sonorous voice which he had used before,—"I thank you for your information, sir, and have the honour to reply to you, that I am Major-general Henry Chaloner, colonel of the fifth regiment of horse, and commander-in-chief of this district here of Worcester. And now to speak of justice, sir, I trust that on looking somewhat more narrowly into these matters, it may not appear that you have overstepped the limits of its more accurate construction."

CHAPTER VI.

It can be very readily conceived what was the effect produced by this announcement of the name and rank of the gentleman, who had come in so opportunely to interrupt the summary proceedings of the Ironsides—a name which had been rendered honourably notorious by the gallantry and conduct of its owner, throughout the long and bloody war which had so fiercely devastated England—a rank which placed him in the immediate command of all the

military parties within the limits of his district. The men immediately presented arms; and with an aspect singularly meek and crestfallen, the cornet commenced stammering out a justification of his barbarous proceedings. But Chaloner scarce heard him through four sentences wherein, though labouring hard to show some case against Frank Norman, he had entirely failed to do so, before he interrupted him.

"No, sir, no cause at all!" he said, "no cause at all even to arrest the young man. If he did strike the soldier, he was in execution of no duty. I do assure you, Cornet Despard, that it is very well for you I came up, ere you had gone further;—as it is, sir, give me your sword, return straightways to your quarters, and report yourself under arrest. I will see your colonel, and confer with him, to-morrow. How now, Master Sherlock," he continued, "what have

you been about, to bring yourself within the pale of martial law?"

"Lord love you, General Henry," returned the jolly farmer, "nothing! unless it be a crime in the calendar to find a horse! and if it be, it is a very new one! But I don't know, mayhap the young man thought I stole it!"

"Fie! fie! thou steal, John Sherlock! that scarcely will pass muster, even for a suspicion. Here is another very palpable straining of authority, which, trust me, Cornet Despard, I am not the man to pass over or forget. Setting aside the gross injustice, the petty pelting tyranny of these proceedings, sir, the mere report of such things, done by an officer of the Parliament, will work more evil to the cause than a defeat on a pitched field of battle. We shall have all the country crying out on us, and that too very justly, for of a truth this

is the very wantonness of petty persecution. What were the further duties, sir, enjoined upon this patrol, besides the bullying of idiot boys, and plundering of pedlers' packs? What were your orders?"

"To scour the country roads, searching such places, as I should deem suspicious, and making prisoners all armed malignants, with an especial view to the arrest of Captain Wyvil, who escaped somewhere in this quarter from Gette's brigade last night. When I had finished here, I did propose to make a further search at Woolverton."

"To what end, sir?—the hall was searched last night, as I have learned this morning by a despatch from my worshipful friend Master Selby—and no one found therein, nor any shade of reason for suspicion. There was some rudeness too on that occasion, and his fair daughter was entreated but discourteously. Strange! that men, calling them-

selves soldiers, and wearing honourable swords, should stoop unto such base actions.

"Enough, sir!—for the present!—you know my pleasure; this sword shall be restored to you only upon the verdict of your officers. Lancepesade! Cornet Despard is your prisoner: march him at once on to head-quarters, and give my service, Major-general Chaloner's service, and a fair greeting to Colonel Keating, or to Major Gettes, and say *I* have ordered him under arrest for a court-martial! And for yourself, sir, and your men, I bid you to beware! I have heard complaints erewhile of much misconduct toward the people of the country; see that ye bear yourselves henceforth soberly at the least, and modestly; or it shall be the worse for ye.

"It hath pleased," he continued, reverentially touching the brim of his hat as he spoke. "It hath pleased the Great Dis-

penser of the universe to put an end to the bloody and infuriate strife which hath now for so many years laid waste our native land! The power of the Parliament is firmly established throughout all England! There are no enemies in arms throughout the island! and you must learn to know, that although soldiers, ye are citizens also; and as citizens answerable to the English laws—to which, in my district at the least, I will take care that ye shall be obedient! Remember, men, what I now say to you; so shall ye 'scape, it may be, worse censure in the time to come;—and above all, remember that, while I rule in Worcestershire, all men, of all opinions, of all parties, so they obey the laws and keep the peace of the land, shall be protected harmless, as our countrymen and brothers. Now, lancepesade, release your prisoners, draw off your men, mount them, and make no tarrying on the

way; see that you do report yourself at Barnsley Moor ere noon. Begone, sir!"

Within five minutes the horses were unpicketed, the musketoons reslung, the corporal gave the word—"Prepare to mount—mount!—Fall in!—by files ma-arch! Steady, men; Trot!" and with their late commander riding, crestfallen, dark, and sullen, as a disarmed and disgraced prisoner in the centre of the detachment, they swept off at a hard trot, that soon caused the jingling of their spurs and scabbards, and all the noisy clatter of their harness to be lost in the distance, down the green windings of the lane.

The Ironsides were scarcely out of hearing when Henry Chaloner dismounted from his horse, and casting the bridle to the oldest of his servants, who had sprung to the ground as soon as he saw his master alighting, desired him to bait the beasts with a good feed of oats, and then to get his breakfast with his fellows; instructions

which were attended to forthwith with a degree of alacrity that seemed to prove them by no means unwelcome. After having given these directions, he turned to John Sherlock, and begged that he would proceed no farther on his way till they should have some minutes of discourse together, and then receiving his assurance that he would wait his pleasure if it should be till midnight, he stooped his head to pass into the low-browed porch, and entered the little hostelry in silence.

"There now!" exclaimed the farmer, as he disappeared, "there goes as brave a soldier and as good a gentleman as any one in all England!"

"Ay, that he is," replied young Norman, "be the other who he may. If all the puritans were such as Henry Chaloner, many a kingsman hereaway would join with them."

"Puritan! Tush! he's no more a puritan.

than thou be," Sherlock answered. "He always went to church, while church there was in the old abbaye—and never was seen at conventicle—and he rides well with the stag-hounds;—ay! and I've seen him shoot at the butts, and dance around the may-pole, many's the summer evening!—He is no puritan!"

"Why man he was against the king, from the beginning," retorted the other—"he spoke against him always in the parliament-houses; and when the people armed, he was among the first,—and fought in every battle through the war from Edgehill down to Worcester; and if he was opposed to them that cut the king's head off at Whitehall,—when it was done and over, he helped to keep the son out of the father's throne. If he be not a puritan, then I don't know what is one!"

"Well! well! he isn't what I call one," persisted honest John; "for he isn't a

preaching and a praying always, in season and out of season—and he don't snuffle through his nose, like a hog in a high wind; nor whine like a whipped spaniel. He isn't a fanatic, nor a hypocrite, nor a canter—not a fawner on the great, nor a grinder of the poor and helpless. He has an honest, kind heart, and an open eye that looks a man i' the face; and a frank smile on his lips, and a ready and bold answer on his tongue. And so I say he's not a puritan—and what I say, that I'll uphold, Frank Norman!"

"That's right," answered Norman, laughing; "that's right, John, always! but you'll find no one here to contend with, for he *is* a good gentleman, and well liked through the country, Puritan or no! But it won't do my standing chattering here with all my rounds to go, and the morn growing late already—I must be moving, and that briskly. There's an outlying buck somewhere nigh

Reardon Forest, that I've been after these three days, and for the life of me I cannot get on's slot."

And with the words he took his rifle up again, looked to the priming and the flint, and whistling a lively air, vaulted over the fence near the horsetrough, and traversing the meadow with a light springy step was lost to sight in the plantations at the farther side. His example was immediately followed by John Brent and the pedler, who went off, the former leading his white pony, and the latter sturdily shouldering his pack, in the direction of the hall; while the bold farmer, after watching the grooms for a few minutes busied about the horses, tied the black charger to a staple in the shade, and stretching himself out at full length on a settle in the sunshine, to wait the officer's leisure, was soon snoring in as sound a morning's sleep as ever sealed an eyelid.

In the meanwhile the subject of their conversation, quietly lifting the latch of the old oaken door, entered the kitchen, which was, as usual in those days, the principal apartment of the inn. It was a large long room with wainscoted walls, and a low ceiling of black oak, from which were suspended hams, flitches of bacon, and huge pieces of hung-beef sufficient to have maintained an army for a twelvemonth. The whole farther end of the room was occupied by an enormous fireplace, with a high-backed wooden settle on each side of it, and a tall mantelpiece, grotesquely carved and blackened with the smoke of ages; along the front, looking out upon the little green and the old oak-tree, were no less than three latticed casements, their ample sills bedecked with pots of flowers and sweet herbs; and under these was a huge oaken dresser, so brightly polished that it might well have

served for a mirror to the bright-cheeked damsels of the inn. The greater part of the wall facing the windows was covered by a rack filled with long rows of splendid pewter trenchers, hardly less clear than silver.

A tall old eight-day clock, surmounted with a glorious canopy of peacocks' feathers —two corner beauffets, well stored with silver tankards, long Venice drinking-glasses, pieces of antique porcelain, a japan box or two of knives and spoons, and a gilded salt-cellar—the glory of the whole collection, and an heirloom of the family—with sundry short-legged, high-backed, chairs, completed the furniture of the quiet hospitable room. It should be added that every thing was most minutely and fastidiously clean; from the neatly-sanded floor to the polished platters and gleaming copper candlesticks and skillets, arranged so orderly upon the walls. There was not a cobweb in the darkest

nook, not a grain of dust on the panes of the corner-cupboards, not a cloud of moisture on the drinking-glasses, not a speck of tarnish on the cups and tankards;—the white dimity curtains were not merely spotless, but glossy with the traces of the recent iron; the very flytraps of paper, quaintly fashioned by the scissors, which hung from the low beams, seemed to be but just placed there, so free were they from any stain or blemish.

It must not be supposed, however, that these particulars were all, or indeed any of them, now observed by the young soldier. His eye did indeed run over them as he entered; but if he noted them at all, it was merely as things which he had seen a hundred times before, and of which the absence alone would have surprised him. Had it, however, all been unusual and new, as on the contrary it was familiar to his eyes, he would at that moment have disregarded it;

for there were two groups in the room, either of which, from their distressful and interesting aspect, would have monopolized the thoughts of any one.

The first was composed of the unhappy idiot, or "innocent" as he was delicately termed by the country folks, who had not yet recovered from his seizure, although the violence of the paroxysm was even now abating, surrounded by several females of the house, bathing his sallow brow with simple essences, laving the acrid slaver from his quivering lips, and using such mild remedies to sooth him as their experience had taught them to apply. Among them most conspicuous was the girl Cicely, with another pippin-cheeked dark-eyed handmaid, and a thin gaunt old woman with snow-white hair neatly arranged below her checkered kerchief; but superintending all, and observing with a deep anxious eye the long-drawn

sobs and convulsive twitches of the boy, was a young woman whose appearance could scarce fail to create an immediate interest in the eyes of the most casual observer.

She was a pale fair creature, with a singularly intellectual expression on her features, which were moulded in the most exact lines of Grecian symmetry. There was not, however, one shade of colour on her pure pale cheek; not one tint of the blood showing through the transparent skin —all was as colourless, and seemingly as cold, as statuary marble, except the mouth, which, with a singular contrast, was of the ripest richest crimson. Her eyes were very large and bright, of a deep liquid blue; but they too had a strangely cold and chilling aspect—a clearness, like that of the cloudless frosty sky of a December day, which, although quite as deep and liquid and trans-

parent in its hue, could never be mistaken for the warm azure of a midsummer's evening. Her hair, which was exceedingly profuse, even to redundance, was strained tight across the temples, and rolled up into a knot of the smallest possible dimensions low down on the neck, as might be seen through the thin lawn of her unornamented cap.

In person she was below the middle size, slightly and delicately made, with small neat feet, and hands so white and slender that many a court lady might have envied them; her dress was a high-necked close-fitting gown of some black stuff, and a white apron, worn without any ornament at all except a wedding-ring of plain gold, which perhaps might explain both the black garments and the melancholy air—for no words can describe the fixed and settled sadness which was visible, not in her tranquil features only and her unsmiling lip, but in every sound of

her voice, in every movement of her body, in every look of her unimpassioned eye. She spoke, and moved, and looked, like one who, although in the world, is yet not of it —who with duties to perform, and cares to undergo, has neither pleasure in the present, nor hope in the future; and alas! how sad, how unspeakably sad, and pitiful! that one so young, so gentle, and so fair, should have been so bereaved, as to make all the laughing earth, with all its sounds and sights of beauty, one wide illimitable tomb for ever!

The second group, which had an interest little, if at all inferior to the first, consisted of three persons only—an old woman, so old that she seemed indeed to have lived far beyond the space allotted to man's sojourn here below, seated erect in a large easy-chair before the fire, and two little children. A single glance showed that the ancient dame was confined to her seat by some

paralysis, or other ailment, which, crippling her lower limbs, had left the upper portion of her body unaffected, and her mind unimpaired. She was stone blind, moreover with that uncommon species of blindness which, while it entirely destroys the vision, yet spares the appearance of the eyeball, so that it is but by the wandering unspeculative glare of the clear orbs that a stranger can pronounce them sightless. A terrible expression of anxiety and grief and fear was now distorting the serene lineaments, and filling the blind eyes of the helpless woman with bitter scalding tears, as with a querulous and lamentable cry she would now wail, and now ask hurried questions, which no one could find time to answer, concerning "her boy—her poor boy—her poor, witless, innocent boy—Martin!" The little children, two bright-haired, blue-eyed, fairy-looking girls, of six and eight years old,

clinging to the grandmother's apron, had tried at first to comfort her with their small artless prattle, assuring her that cousin Martin would soon be better, and the like; but now seeing that the old woman's tears and tremours but increased, they too were sympathetically frightened, and were both weeping, as fast as their little eyes could weep, they knew not wherefore.

Such was the scene that met the kind eye of Henry Chaloner as he entered, and he immediately advanced to the first group, as being that where he most probably might render some assistance; but seeing at a glance that those about poor Martin, long since habituated to his malady, were managing him as well as, or better than he could have advised himself, and that his seizure was fast yielding to their soothing applications, he turned away gently, without asking any question, and walked across the room with a light step toward the old lady.

"Don't be alarmed," he said, in the lowest tones of his deep measured voice; "don't be alarmed, I beg of you, dear dame, for there is no occasion, I assure you."

"Dear Lord!" cried the old woman starting at the unexpected sounds, for the bustle about the sick youth, and the quietness of his own movements, had prevented her discovering the entrance of the young soldier. "Dear Lord! — if that be not General Henry!" for with the instinctive quickness of the blind she had easily recognised his accents, which were, indeed, sufficiently remarkable.

"It is indeed, dame Rainsford," he replied, taking her hand gently as he spoke, and sitting down upon the wooden settle near her. "It is indeed me; and sorry I am too, to find you thus grieved and terrified—but I assure you there is no occasion for alarm, much less for grief, at all! And

you well know I would not say that, if it were not true, even to set your poor heart at rest; but truly there is none! Some rude men here a little time since alarmed poor Martin, it would seem, and he has had one of his wonted fits—no more, I do assure you—and it is yielding fast, I see, even now to your fair daughter-in-law's kind tendance. He will be better, I dare promise you, anon!"

"Ay, sir, I'll warrant it," responded the old woman, reassured instantly by the calm voice and characteristic consolations of Henry Chaloner. "I'll warrant it, if that be all. Marian knows how to care for him well. Heigho! poor Marian. I was afraid that it was something worse, for I heard Martin cry out fearfully a while since—and they have had no time to answer a poor, helpless, castaway, old thing such as I am; but I don't find any fault, for they're good

children, all of them. Heigho! But since I lost my poor boy Roger, in that sad fight there at Long Marston, it's all dull somehow—dull and dreary—and no head to the house like! though Marian be a wonder! Well! well! it's all for the best—all for the best, thank God! and his good time will come!"

"Ay, indeed is it," answered Chaloner. "He never burdens any beyond their power to bear, and never casts a snare before the feet of any, but what therewith he frames a path whereby we make escape from it! And lo! here in good season, Martin is on his feet again, and doing bravely."

"Bring him this way—bring my poor child this way—will you not, Marian?—where are you taking him, my girl?"

"To lie down, mother, for a while," replied the young pale widow, obeying her

words, nevertheless, and guiding the hapless being across the sanded floor; "he always needs a sleep, you know, when the fit leaves him."

A melancholy scene, but one of surpassing interest and beauty, followed, as the poor idiot, led up by his widowed aunt, approached the bereaved sightless parent, on whom his meaningless and stolid eye dwelt with a feeble glimmering of expression, as if his veiled imperfect memory partially recognised the venerable being who years ago had soothed his anguished infancy. A faint sick smile played over his pale lip, as by the force of habit he bowed his head to meet the pressure of her thin, shrivelled, tremulous fingers, and felt her kiss upon his sallow forehead, and the warm tears, which fell like summer rain upon his matted locks.

"Bless thee, my boy—my poor, poor boy! God bless thee, for thou art very

dear to me—oh! very! very!—although thou be not comely to the sight, nor gifted with the light of heavenly reason,—very dear art thou to my soul, child of affliction, being of suffering and sorrow—sole relic and last gift of my fair first-born. God's goodness be about thy life-long darkness, to guide and comfort and protect thee!"

The heavy tears dropped fast and frequent from the kind eyes of Chaloner at this heart-touching prayer; and as he saw that aged woman, deprived of all the wonted blessings of this life, crippled and blind, and reft of all her children, bending in grateful prayer over that idiot boy, his soul was so full that he could not frame an "Amen" as she ended.

They led the poor youth to a chamber, and gradually the comely and serene tranquillity, which was its usual expression, resumed its reign over the face of the blind

woman; and the tears of the little girls were lost like April showers in bright sunny laughter, as they played with the fringe of Henry's scarf, and wondered at his glittering sword-hilt; and Marian and her maidens returned from their labour of love, and all things again wore their wonted aspect.

A thoughtful quiet gladness was perceptible on the wan features of the youthful widow, as she greeted her kind guest, and apologized briefly and simply for the neglect he had experienced, and the confused state of the household.

"Oh! speak not of it," he said, much more quickly than it was his custom to reply; "speak not, I pray you, of it, if you would not grieve me. I saw, and was very sorry for the cause; and could I have prevented it in time, you will believe me when I say, I would. As it is, I will take care no such abuse occur again within my district.

But now, my good Marian, I must put you to some trouble. I have ridden nearly a score of miles this morning, and have not broken my fast yet; and I have with me six hungry knaves besides. Will you prepare some food for us, and show me to your summer parlour, where I may write a letter, and commune with my own thoughts a little while in private?"

"Surely, sir, surely!" she replied, "would it were in my power to show by greater services my gratitude for all your goodness. Walk this way, General Henry!" and as she spoke she opened a small door in the chimney corner, behind the oaken settle, which gave access to a narrow winding staircase, up which she led him into a pleasant lofty chamber, occupying one of the gables, and overlooking from its large latticed window, the smooth green meadow, and the dark quiet woodlands in the distance. The

floor was strewn with clean white sand, the fireplace filled with the varnished leaves and bright red berries of the holly, the walls were wainscoted with highly-polished oak—there was a round table, with a standish, pens and papers, and two vast old-fashioned armchairs in the recess of the window, and in short all was so cool and clean and tranquil, and the mild air of the radiant autumn morning came in so balmily through the leaves of the old oak, and caught such pleasant perfumes from the flower-pots on the window-seats that a more fitting place could hardly have been found wherein to fix the mind in meditation.

And so thought Henry Chaloner, as he threw himself into the chair, and wrote and pondered on his writing, while servants went and came, and spread a large board behind him with all appliances for the morning meal, unheard by him, or at least

unheeded. At last, his task concluded, he raised his head, and asking for a taper and some wax to secure his letters, desired that his head groom might come to him; and, by the time he had fastened up the two notes he had written, the man stood before him.

"Andrew," he said, "let James Warr take the Peacock gelding, and ride with all speed to Colonel Keating's quarters at Low Barnsley—he must be contented with a crust of bread and a draught of ale till his errand's done, for it is all important. There he may feed his horse, and dine and breakfast both in one, and ride home at his leisure—there is no reply to wait for! And do thou take this note thyself to Woolverton, to Master Selby's, and tarry for an answer. It will not hold thee long, and thou canst e'en make up for it when thou get'st back—I warrant me thou'rt hungry

now, but there's no help for it, good Andrew—the meat will tarry, but not so the matter."

"I'm not so hungry, sir, but I can ride all day and all night too, and that gladly, fasting, if it were on your service," answered the old groom, who had long served, and well loved his young master.

"I thank you, Andrew, and believe you;" he replied, "but shall not have, I hope, so far to tax your willingness. Meanwhile, as you go down, ask them to serve my breakfast."

CHAPTER VII.

THE mind of Henry Chaloner was one of those, unquestionably, which are so well and accurately balanced by nature in the first instance, and so well schooled, in the second, by experience and Christian philosophy, that of all they are the least likely to be thrown into violent perturbation by the pressure of any external circumstances. He had, moreover, that fixed and tranquil self-reliance, common to men of great parts who have seen much and suffered much in the world, which enables its possessors to

meet the most difficult contingencies with a quiet resolute front—and, better yet, he had that immovable faith and confidence in God's power and mercy which supports the Christian, dauntless and invincible, through all extremities of toil and trial. Still there is no combination of natural and acquired parts—no innate hardihood of heart, no practice in the world's warfare, no sternness of philosophy, no support of Christianity—nothing indeed short of apathetic dullness and deadness of the soul, that can at all times master grief, and bid the foul fiends, doubt, despondency, and anxious penetrating care, avaunt in the first moment of their onslaught.

And in the present instance, well-regulated as was the mind of the young officer, and well-disciplined to suppress its feelings in consideration to the necessity of others, it were entirely useless to deny that for some

cause or other, he was exceedingly restless and uneasy. The meal which was set before him remained almost untasted, although it consisted of every delicacy that the time and place could furnish. Though the red-spotted trout were fresh from the neighbouring brooklet, though the eggs, which accompanied the bubbling rasher, were newlaid that morning, though the buttock of cold powdered beef was of the fattest, and the mustard genuine Tewkesbury, and though all was served with that appetizing and rare cleanliness which will do more to tempt a fastidious palate than the most luxurious dishes, still there was something at work within, which would not suffer him to swallow a mouthful—he made, indeed, several efforts to conquer his reluctance, but still the meat would not down, and he gave up the point, after a second long draught from the spiced tankard, which

the fever and heat of his mind rendered very grateful.

Throwing himself back in the armchair, he remained for some time in deep thought with his hand tightly pressed upon his eyes, then he rose up restlessly, and leaning out of the window seemed to listen whether he might hear any thing of his man's return, although there had scarcely elapsed time for him to reach the Hall; and then, as if recollecting himself, turned away from the casement, and began walking to and fro the room, with slow and measured paces, which showed that if he were disturbed, it was the disturbance of a regular self-governing spirit, not the headlong rashness of a violent and passionate nature excited beyond all control by any casual irritation. "I much fear—I very much fear that it is so," he at length muttered to himself, thinking as it were aloud, "and if so, it will be in truth

a difficult bad business. I know not what will come of it."

The fact was, that holding a situation of vast importance in the country, the office of major-general of a district under the parliament being tantamount to that which is now termed lord-lieutenant of a county, he had received despatches which gave him no slight uneasiness; and imposed upon him duties the propriety of which he half doubted, and the performance of which could not but be most painful to all his better feelings. After the attempt of the Cavaliers, seconded by a great part of the Scottish people, to elevate Charles II. to the throne of the martyr, as they fondly persisted in calling the weak man who had fallen a victim to his own obstinate and selfish insincerity—after this attempt, checked by the daring energy of Cromwell in the battle of Dunbar of the preceding year, and now

completely overthrown by the crowning mercy of Worcester fight—a spirit of persecution broke out, or at least manifested itself far more generally than at any previous period of the war, among the presbyterians and independents towards the scattered fugitives of the defeated party. The king himself was hunted with a vindictive pertinacity, from which men augured easily that his capture would lead to a repetition of the tragedy of the thirtieth of January, while his adherents were cut down, or shot like dogs, wherever they were taken, many days after the entire dispersion, and, as it might almost be termed, dissolution of the party.

The fears, however, or the hatred of the parliament remained unsatisfied; and instructions were issued, throughout all the country to all the major-generals in command to omit no precautions for the pre-

venting the assemblage of small armed bodies which might serve as the *nuclei* of future risings; and to spare no pains for the apprehension of sundry, the most eminent, leaders of the late rebellion, whom they were directed, as fast as captured, to send up to London, where it was intended that they should be left for trial on indictments of high treason. A general amnesty was indeed talked of, but unquestionably if any such measure were in contemplation, so many exceptions would be made, as would render it such in name only; and this was rendered evident, by the long lists of persons, forwarded to the governors of districts for immediate proclamation, whom men were forbidden on pain of forfeiture, imprisonment, and in some cases, death, from "resetting, harbouring, or comforting with food or fire or raiment."

All this tended to render Henry Chaloner

uneasy; for though he had, as we have seen, systematically opposed the usurpations of the king from the first to the last—though he had considered Charles I. unfit to reign, and his son even more unqualified to succeed him—though he had excited all his powers of mind and body to banish the obnoxious line from the throne and the country, and though he was prepared to resist to the utmost all efforts to reinstate them, he had yet nothing in his nature of the bigot or the persecutor; and he would now have instantly extended not only full indemnity from any personal harm, but all political and civil privileges to all men of all parties, and opinions, who should thereafter be contented to keep the sword at rest within its scabbard, and vex the land no longer.

But this was not all that troubled him, nor would this have sufficed to trouble him so far, had there been no more reason for

anxiety. Since, in the first place, by virtue of his office he possessed some discretionary power, and so great was the attention which had been ever paid to his opinions by the great man who swayed the destinies of England, that he had little fear of winning from his calmer judgment a sanction to more merciful proceedings than were at present contemplated.

At a late hour of the preceding night, he had been roused from sleep by the arrival of an orderly, bearing to him from the colonel of the Ironsides quartered at Barnsley Moor, a full narrative of the pursuit by a patrolling party, of the proclaimed, malignant Captain Wyvil, of his extraordinary escape, when escape seemed impossible—of the fruitless search of Woolverton Hall, and of the strong grounds which still existed for believing him to be harboured on those premises. The narra-

tive was drawn up with technical nicety, and therein it was certified that several of the brigade, which at first passed the place, both officers and privates, had seen a young and beautiful woman at the window of the fish-house!—it was shown farther, that when the second party came up, scarce twenty minutes later, and actually searched the place, it was vacant! Again it was proved, that during that brief interval the fugitive must have passed within gun-shot of the window where she sat, and that there was not any lane or by-road between the angle of the road leading directly to the bridge, which he had been seen to turn by his pursuers, and the spot where the patrol had overtaken Gette's brigade, by which he could have turned off to the right or left, and so eluded the close chase.

The effect of this evidence, although by no means really conclusive, went far to con-

vince Henry Chaloner, who well knew the secret predilection of his cousin Selby, and the romantic high-minded generosity of his lovely daughter, that by some means or other, one or both of them were concerned in the escape of Wyvil. In this opinion he was confirmed yet farther by a note which he had received, before he left his chamber in the morning, from Marc Selby, informing him of the search which had been instituted on his premises, complaining of the rudeness of the soldiery, and requesting to see him at his early leisure on business of some import. The receipt it was of this note which caused him to hasten a measure, on which he had already determined; and he accordingly ordered his horses to be saddled and a suitable train prepared, and sat forth on his ride before the cocks had crowed their matin song. The occurrences which befel him afterward, and especially the dis-

covery of Wyvil's horse by John Sherlock, close, as it was represented, to the place where the fugitive was first missed, and within a few yards of the fishing-house, scarce left a doubt in his mind of the secret agency of Alice in the young cavalier's escape.

It is, of course, unnecessary to say that to Chaloner this agency, however much inconvenience it might produce to himself, or peril to the fair young girl, did not appear in the light of an offence against any laws, either human or divine; and it is scarcely to be doubted, that had he himself been situated as she was, despite his official duties, he would have acted as she did, and facilitated the evasion of a fugitive, whom he certainly regarded as unfortunate and perhaps mistaken, rather than criminal or guilty. Entertaining these opinions, therefore, the thing in the world which he least

wished at this moment, was that by any casualty he should be forced to discover the hiding-place of Wyvil.

Averse in the first place to cruelty or bloodshedding under all circumstances, convinced that in the present crisis leniency was the true and politic course for the restoration of tranquility and peace, and confident, moreover, that within a short space of time he could bring about a material change in the views of the government, he dreaded to have this case of Wyvil so brought before his eyes that he should have no alternative but to arrest him, when his fate, and not his fate alone, but that of all who had assisted him, would be decided on the instant.

At the same time, he was too rigid in his views of duty and of right to connive secretly at any act which he would not avow in public—all personal consequences

he would have discarded instantly, as utterly unworthy his consideration—and had he with his own hands taken Wyvil in the open country, or found him in the hands of the troopers who had so arrested him, he would have very probably discharged him at his own peril, if satisfied that he entertained no views against the peace of England.

To do this, however, if he should be detected under the roof of Selby, would be of no avail to save the old man and his lovely daughter, from forfeiture of all their worldly goods, and from a long imprisonment, ending perhaps in death upon the scaffold.

He felt that, with the information laid before him, he had no course left but to investigate the case completely, and if it should prove needful—to order a fresh search! and hating, as he did, to contem-

plate the possibility of the young man's being brought to judgment by his means—and dreading, as he did for a thousand reasons, the consequences to his friends and kindred at the Hall—who shall be moved by wonder if Henry Chaloner, despite all natural advantages of equanimity and fortitude—all supplemental aids of discipline, philosophy, and religion, was ill at ease, anxious, and unhappy?

An hour or more had passed, since he dispatched the groom to the hall, an errand which should not as he conceived at the most have occupied one half that time; and after looking out of the window anxiously two or three times within five times as many minutes, he ordered his horses to be again got ready, and determined to ride down the road, feeling assured that he should meet his messenger returning, before he could reach the gates.

He had just given these instructions, when the sound of a slight bustle reached his ears from the rooms below, and immediately after some words spoken in a low silvery voice, which fell upon his soul like the memory of some familiar tune heard in the happy days of boyhood and unforgotten through all the sins, and strifes, and miseries of manhood, even to remote old age. It was but a few words, or to speak more correctly, the tones and accents of a few words, which were themselves inaudible, that reached him—and these too dulled and deadened by the distance and by the obstacles through which they were transmitted, yet at the first faint note he started to his feet listening intently, and apparently recognizing the speaker in a moment, took up his hat and sword, and hastened down into the kitchen whence the sounds proceeded.

The moment he opened the door from the small turnpike staircase, with the full morning sunshine pouring in through the open casement in her beautiful features and graceful figure, Alice Selby stood before him, conversing in tones full of soft considerate kindness with the old afflicted woman, and the young widow, who were listening to all she said with an expression, not of love only, or respect, but of the deepest and most reverential gratitude.

Chaloner's servants, their morning meal concluded, had long since gone out to attend the horses, and there was no one in the room except the members of the family, and an old gray-headed serving-man in a plain livery of green and gold, with a stone jug holding perhaps two quarts, slung in a leathern belt across one shoulder, and a large wicker basket by his side, who was wiping his forehead, as if somewhat tired

with his load, although there was a cheerful smile upon his weather-beaten features, showing that he grudged not the early labour.

Alice was speaking at the moment when her cousin paused at the open door; but as it was placed in a dark angle of the room, and as her eyes were turned in a direction somewhat different, she did not see him, but went on in the same low musical accents which had so pleasantly affected him—"so when I missed you, Marian," she said, "from our little congregation at the hall on Sunday I was afraid there was something amiss with Dame Rainsford or poor Martin—and I should have come over yesterday to see you all; but I was somewhat occupied in the forenoon within doors—and to say truly, I forgot all about it after dinner, and went out to walk in the park, and fell asleep, I believe, in the fish-

house; and was frightened a good deal afterward—which was certainly very foolish in me, Marian—by some Parliament soldiers, who rode by smoking and laughing and making a loud rude disturbance. But when I saw this morning that neither of my little pets, Bella nor my god-daughter Alice, were at school, I was quite sorry and ashamed of my neglect. So I put on my cloak and hood, and made old Jeremy bring down a bottle of the choice canary, which Doctor Troubridge thought so good for your mother's ailment, and a few cates and simples from my own laboratory for poor Martin."

"Oh! you are kind, God bless you, Mistress Alice!—and He will, I doubt not. But there is nothing much amiss—my mother, it is true, was ailing somewhat on the Sunday morning, and that was the reason of my not coming up to chapel—

but she was quite well yesterday, again—as well that is, as she can hope to be, and in good spirits, God be thanked! And there is no harm done this morning, though the soldiers were very rude and brutal, and used Martin, so that he got one of his bad fits, and is only the better of it now, and has just dropped asleep!"

"Soldiers," said Alice turning very pale —"what soldiers—are they here now—quick, good Marian?" and as she spoke she pulled the hood further over her features and looked wildly around.

"None, my fair cousin," answered Henry, before any of the others had time to reply, advancing into the room with his head uncovered. "None at all, Alice, unless you count me one—but if you do, I don't believe you'll judge me very formidable!"

"Oh! cousin Henry, is it you?" she answered with a gay smile—"you startled

me at first a little, for I did not dream of meeting you here. No! I don't think you *very* formidable, although you are a soldier; but that is more than we can say for all of your good Parliament troopers, since some of them are rude, not to say brutal!"

"Of which I had a very clear proof here but now," Chaloner answered. "And in truth, if you will pardon me, I do think you were best confine your walks within the limits of your father's grounds just now; these Ironsides, flushed with their victory at Worcester, are scouring the roads all round, and, I fear much, abusing shamefully their power, and the trust reposed in them. I will see these things righted ere long, if I am to hold the district as commander, but for a few days, Alice, take my advice, and let your park walks be the limit of your wanderings."

"Indeed I will, cousin Henry," she re-

plied, "indeed I will take your advice; and I thank you for it. They came and searched our house last night, for some one whom they charged us with concealing, and one of them, an officer—a singularly ill ungracious looking youth, was positively rude to me!"

"He will not so offend again, fair Mistress Alice," answered the young man—"for if as I doubt not, your friend was Cornet Despard, I have just sent him to head-quarters in arrest for most unsoldierly and brutal conduct here this morning; and I will take care he is duly punished. But come," he added, "it seems to me your visit of charity and kindness is concluded. I was about to ride down to the hall even now, to wait on your father who signified to me by letter a wish that I would see him touching this business you have mentioned—suffer me to send on my horses, and on foot escort you homeward."

"No! thank you cousin," answered Alice, with a smile. "I am playing lady Bountiful this morning, and have to pay two visits more to two of my old pensioners in the village. Since you have driven these rude discourteous warriors home, like a fair and gallant knight, an errant damsel may hold herself safe for this time. But, jest apart, Henry,—I *must* go a little half mile further, and Jeremy has the key of the small postern gate beside the heronry wood, and I shall go in by that entrance. So go your ways, good cousin, and commune with my father, and then come join me in the park. You'll tarry dinner with us, surely! Nay—I'll have no denial—and now I think of it, my father means, I fancy, to detain you overnight. Fare you well for the present—fare you well, dame—here be the simples, Marian—and you give your mother a good cup of the Canary straightway, poor soul, she

needs some comfort. Fare you well Bella one kiss, my little Alice!"—and among the blessings of all, and the fervent thanks of the old matron, in whose opinion Alice was an absolute angel—too beautiful and good for aught below, she vanished from the room, leaving it—as Henry Chaloner thought—lower and darker and more gloomy than it had ever seemed to him before—and after a little while he too, having paid his reckoning, mounted his horse and rode away slowly toward the hall gates; before reaching which he met his servant coming up at full gallop, the bearer of a verbal message from Master Selby, praying "that Major General Chaloner would visit his poor house with all convenient speed!"

CHAPTER VIII.

It was about the same hour of the same day at which the rustic party were interrupted by the arrival of the Ironsides at the Stag's Head, that the squire of Woolverton—the morning meal being finished, and all his household busied about their wonted avocations—gave orders to the steward that he should not on any account be disturbed for a couple of hours; and, locking the library door with jealous care behind him, proceeded through the secret passage to the hiding-place of his concealed guest. It was

perhaps fortunate, that the habits of the old man, secluded, sedentary, and averse to much intercourse with men, were such as to prevent any speculation or surprise at such an order, it being almost his daily custom to shut himself up in the pursuit of some abstruse and difficult study—so that no one of the servants entertained the least suspicion on the subject.

The greatest risk that Selby had discovered in the case, was the providing food for the stranger without attracting notice; and this he was in fact only able to manage by robbing his own buttery nightly, after the people had retired to rest, much to the wonder and disgust of the old housekeeper, who was continually missing corners of venison pasties, cold larded capons, remnants of neat's tongues and whole loaves of bread, for the disappearance of which she could in no wise account, and concerning

e was perpetually worrying and
her fellow-servants to no end or
It was then with a basket full of
isions, two or three long-necked
Bordeaux wine, a fresh supply of
nge of linen, and sundry volumes
ng-winded cumbersome romances
ay, that the old squire now sought

noiseless step and a suppressed
the good old man traversed the
darksome corridors, now climbing
narrow stairways, now winding
l by deep gradual descents, turning
gles, and passing through trap-
ost innumerable, until he reached
and distant crypt wherein he had
il to his slumbers on the preceding
o deep had been those slumbers,
mpletely had the young man been
ght by the toil, the exertion, and

the tremendous excitement of the previous days, that he lay buried still in a profound and dreamless stupor; and it was well that Selby had brought a masterkey by means of which he gained admission to the cell; since not by any signal that he dared make could he attract his guest's attention. Unlocking the door quietly he entered, and setting down his load, stepped lightly to the bedside; the lamp was burning steadily upon the table, filling the whole of the small room with a smoky yellow light, and pouring full upon the uncurtained features of the sleeper.

His clothes, cast off in negligent disarray, were heaped upon the stools and table, his rich buff coat, all laced with tawny silk and looped with gold, hung on the back of the arm-chair, moist and discoloured by the waters of the moat, through which the wearer had swam on the previous evening

—his cuirass of bright steel, inlaid with arabesques of gold, lay on the table, sending back the rays of the dull lamp in strong and dancing gleams of brighter lustre—his vest and trunk hose of murray-coloured velvet, his russet buskins with their long gilded spurs, and his broad-brimmed slouched beaver with its black drooping plume, lay in confusion on the stone-paved floor—but the blue baldric of his rapier was turned around one of the posts of his pallet bed, so that the hilt was ready to his hand at a moment's notice; while, as a further precaution, he had thrust the point of his naked poniard into a crevice of the headboard so that it could be grasped with his left hand, as readily as the sword hilt with his right, on the least emergency.

Little, however, would either weapon have availed him now, had the intruder

been an enemy; for he still slept so deeply that he might have been slain easily, or overpowered, without the possibility of making any adequate resistance. For a few moments Marc Selby would not arouse him from his state, as it appeared of absolute insensibility; but stood gazing steadfastly upon the tranquil lineaments of the young sleeper. Those lineaments which the old man had seen but imperfectly the night before, were certainly and eminently handsome—he had a profusion of soft, silky, light-brown hair, falling back from his brow in long straight masses, waved slightly on the temples, and curled as it would seem, artificially at the extremity—his forehead was very high and prominent, but rather narrower at the temples than below, which detracted somewhat from the beauty of the feature; it was, however, singularly white and smooth, and perfectly

unwrinkled, except that there was a deep indentation as if of an habitual frown, at the inner point of the eyebrows which were straight and well defined, and of a colour several degrees darker than his hair.

His eyes, as could be seen even while he slept, by the form and dimensions of the lids, were large and well opened, and fringed with long black lashes; his nose was thin and somewhat sharply, though not highly aquiline; his mouth, which by its firm compression and set downward curve bespoke decision of character and resolute hardihood, had yet an expression of voluptuousness in the full prominent underlip, and in the fleshy curviture of the projecting chin; and the combination of the whole was, as has been already said, sufficient to constitute a face of decided and unusual attractiveness. The colouring was

rich and manly; a complexion, which had been naturally very fair and florid, having been darkened by exposure to the weather into a ripe and mellow brown, becoming well the narrow dark mustache which he wore on the upper lip, and the small vandyke beard trimmed into the fashion of a fleur-de-lis, with two small upward curls and a long point between, giving a soldier-like and manly air to a countenance which without it might have been termed effeminate from the smallness and delicacy of all the separate features, rather than from any real want of energy of character in the expression. It may as well be stated, here, although Marc Selby saw them not at present, that his eyes were of a full dark blue, and his mouth was filled by a set of teeth, as regular and white and pearly as were ever set off by the coral lips of the loveliest woman.

e old man gazed on the comely fea-
ıe certainly thought that he had
een a handsomer man, nor one with
bland and beautiful expression. Yet
f this last appearance was factitious
and depended on the present situation
eeper, who, completely overdone with
s sunk in the voluptuous and calm
llity of the deepest and most dreamless
Had he been awake, however, while
ld have admitted the beauty perhaps
ore largely than at present, the squire
not have discovered by any means
ıe attraction in his aspect; nor drawn
me conclusions with regard to his
ter. He would then have perceived
id all persons, who thought upon the
, until their judgment was over-
ed by the fascination of the young
r's demeanour—that there was an un-
nt look—a look of extreme audacious
ess—in the bright sparkling eye, and

moreover a wavering, changeful, vacillating, glance indicating a fickleness—if not feebleness, of purpose—and remarkably at variance with the resolved and even obstinate expression of the mouth, and he would moreover have detected something hollow and almost mocking in the style of the smooth dulcet smile, which was continually playing about the half-open lips, and revealing the pearly teeth within.

None of these drawbacks to the appearance of Wyvil were at this time perceptible, nor were they indeed ever discovered in their true light by Selby; for he was now so strongly prepossessed by the features of the sleeper, wrapt as they were in soft and placid languor, that he retained the first favourable impression afterward, and, becoming very soon habituated to the man, thought no more about his appearance. While he looked on, however, the character of his guest's repose was altered — a

leeted over the fair tranquil linea-
dark frowning shadow—and anon
t broke out upon his brow in large
led bubbles—he writhed his limbs
ro with a convulsive motion, and
his set teeth with a fierce energy.
articulate sounds came struggling
lips, and at last the listener heard
tter,—"Over! It is all over!"—and
fter another violent struggle, flinging
t hand abroad violently and clutch-
bedclothes with a stern savage
"I have thee, by the throat—dog!
dog—plead not—plead not to me
rcy!—thou didst stab Musgrave in
lood, when he had yielded him a
r!—ha! ha! plead not to me!"
fumbled with his left hand impotently
bed, as if he were grappling for a
n, and then still maintaining the
gripe, as he thought, of his right,—

"How the dog struggles!" he continued; "—plague on't I've lost my dagger!—here, Edgar—Edgar Beavan—run me thy rapier through this hound, or blow his brains out—while I hold him!—Ha! ha!" he added fiercely, his whole face kindled with a wild fiery glare—"Ha! down with thee to hell! and there boast of his murther! Ha! ha-ha! —ha-ha!" and he burst into a fit of convulsive savage laughter, which gradually died away, and left him again all relaxed and dreamless.

"Poor youth! alack, poor youth!" murmured the good old man, "how fearfully the dread strife and the death grapple darkens his fresh unhardened spirit—God pardon him the sin of bloodshedding—since surely he did strike for the right cause! Lo! he frowns now again, and the cold sweat wells out at every pore"—

"Charge! charge!" muttered the sleeper,

interrupting the tenour of his meditations, "charge, once more—kill! kill! kill! no quarter to the rebel dogs!—the damned blood-drinking round-heads!"—

"Ay! he is in the very agony of the hot-heady fight—I will awake him,"—and suiting, as he spoke, the action to the word, he laid his hand lightly on the arm of the sleeper. It was like the work of magic; for scarcely did the old man's finger touch the wrist of Wyvil before he started up, unsheathing his rapier with one hand, and snatching the poniard with the other; and stood erect upon the floor, with eye, hand, foot on the alert in posture of defence. It was scarcely a second since he was struggling in the visions of his tortured sleep, upon the bloody banks of the Team, and now he was in full possession of his senses, cool, self-collected, armed in mind and body, prepared for any fortune.

A quiet smile crossed the fine face of the old squire, and fading away instantly left a grave and even sad expression in its place, as he addressed the youthful cavalier.

"Nay—nay!—It is no foe; nor have you any need of weapons."

"Ha! my kind host," the other interrupted him, lowering the point of his sword, as he spoke, "I crave your pardon, I saw not that it was you."

"You slept in truth heavily," replied Selby, "and your slumbers were so disturbed and restless, that I had the less hesitation in arousing you. Beside, I have much to say to you. In the first place I have brought you food, and wine, and raiment, and all appliances to make your toilet —some books, moreover, and oil for your lamp. Here is a little charcoal likewise, and there should be a brazier somewhere—ay! here it is in the corner;—but make

fire forthwith, and dry your
garments. But first I must re-
to plight me your sacred oath of
ever by any means to publish or
any living creature the secrets of
g-place!"
unthankful else, and base indeed!"
Wyvil; and laying his hand on his
continued, "Most solemnly I
sacred honour, never by word or
ign, or hint, or writing, to reveal
t you shall show to me, in fur-
of my escape and safety—and
ever, or by any chance, forget this
reafter, so may God forget me at
t need!"
ore!" said Selby taking him by the
more! nor had I asked even this,
it is enjoined on me to do so.
ust these things be revealed to any
head of the house, and his next

heir;—but in case of extreme peril, and then under the sanction of an oath—this then sufficeth. Now tell me, sir, what hopes you have of aid, or succour from without?"

"None, presently!" answered the youth; "if I could but reach France, I might do well; for on the outbreak of the war, and since, at many times, I have remitted thither much jewelry and gold. But how to reach the coast, or when there to get shipping, in truth I know not."

"And have you no friends any where, whom you might trust, nor any faithful agent? We may conceal you here, it is true, for a time—but every hour, nay minute, will increase the hazard—suspicion is awake already; and I might say peril is around us!"

"No friends—no friends, at least who could assist me!—but there is one, a secret

ıe king's partisans, though deemed
e pay of Cromwell,—known as the
tram,—if I could make him know
any man could do it, he would

w the man," interrupted Selby,
he man,—but only as a travelling
know him, and it may be can
ıim ere many days—but are you
ay be trusted?"

ıan in these times can be *sure* of
Wyvil answered, after a moment's
but I dare trust myself with him
been often tried and trusted, and so
oved always faithful."

proceed then straightway to have
ht out. As far as may be, we will
s faith—not paying him a crown
re safe on ship-board."

will not avail any thing—Bartram,
called—for that is not his name in
akes no reward from cavaliers."

"That speaks well for his truth, at least! I'll see to it—now, mark me, I do not doubt, but that search will be made again to-morrow or to-day—nor do I very much doubt but that, if one I know conducts the search, this chamber will be readily discovered. So many of the old houses have similar contrivances which have, by chance or treachery or acute wit of the searchers, been discovered, that they have got the trick of them—and this, although not altogether easy, is by no means to be considered as impregnable; it hath, however, further secrets. First let me tell you, there is no lack of fresh air here, although there be no windows—for every where throughout the thickness of the walls there have been framed long winding spiracles, else were it unsafe to burn charcoal.

"Now, Captain Wyvil, mark every word I say—for it may be your life depends on your clear memory. There is a strange

contrivance here; a long metallic tube framed like a trumpet, but with ten times the power—one whisper at the further end fills all this chamber with a reverberating din, that would awake the soundest sleeper though he were drugged with opium;—by this tube notice shall be given you, ere any search commences—an hour, at the least, must elapse, ere any one except myself or Alice could reach this central hold; but notwithstanding, when you shall hear that sound, make no delay—for be assured there will be desperate peril. If, when they reach this spot, they shall find any signs of recent occupation, be sure, that you are lost! —with you it rests, to keep all things so ordered, that they shall be in place as though not touched for months. Pile all the furniture together; leave not a scrap of food, nor a drop of wine, to tell tales, in any drinking-glass—heap the books on the

highest shelf—and lo! here is a bag of dust and rubbish and old feathers—shake this out freely over all—tie the wine-flasks and lamps, and all else that might create surmise, to the leaden weight and hook which lie by the trap-door, I showed you, and sink them in the water—do this as speedily as may be, and then fly!—and, now I think of it, keep no fire any more in the brazier, when you have dried your raiment—so, I doubt not, we may frustrate their expectations that would work us evil."

"But how, or whither must I fly? I see no means at all, nor any—"

"We will waste no time, Captain Wyvil," answered Selby, "but you will follow me, so please you." And with the words he unlocked both the doors, which had remained unopened on the preceding night; and entering that nearest to the stairs, by which lay the descent to the well and trap, was

l closely by the young cavalier,
ttention had been firmly riveted on
llable the old man uttered.
greater part of an hour had elapsed
ney returned; and when they did so
y the other passage, so that it was
t that Marmaduke had now been
quainted with all the different modes
ss from his friendly prison-house.
ere both somewhat pale, and the
hich they bore burned very blue
, and all their clothes were soiled in
laces, and besmirched with much
ould—the old man was moreover so
xhausted, that he sat down for a
the arm-chair, panting and seem-
ite overwrought by the fatigue, and
l atmosphere he had imbibed in
ng the gloomy vaults and corridors
dark labyrinth.
a few moments' rest, however, he

filled himself a beaker of the generous wine of Bordeaux, and pushing the flask across the board to Wyvil, motioned him to fill up, and emptied his glass at a single draught. "Well now," he said, "remember, I beseech you—the clue in the right hand-passage is the number three! to the right throughout —every third turning to the right!—those to the left, and all the others are but false turnings, and deceptions. In the left hand it is five! Now, if the alarm be by day—neither of them are very safe!—both opening as they do in the clear country!—by night it matters not much which you take, but be careful that there be no one watching, ere you issue out. If then the alarm be by day, you were best try the other, and tarry there until you hear the signal.

"Now then, give me your hand—farewell—I may not now wait longer, lest I be missed. Alice or I will visit you this even-

l now, young man, consider—I have you weigh well the vast repose in *you*, a very stranger—all charity and my own sense of duty! vn and daughter's life!—my own ghter's honour!—no more, sir—one enough!—no answer, I beseech you ove all!—no protestations. Deeds, friend—deeds done hereafter will a whole ton of words at the pre- od bless you, and farewell!" and us he left him quite abruptly; and he door after him, hurried away speed to his own private study.

was it that he did make haste; for ot been there ten minutes, and had replaced the volumes which cou- he spring upon the book-shelves, his disordered dress, and seated pen in hand at his desk, when a tstep without, followed immediately

the slamming of a distant door, and was succeeded by a tap on the panel, and the voice of a domestic announcing the arrival of a messenger bearing a letter with a despatch from Major-general Henry Chaloner.

Rising instantly, with his pen still in his fingers wet with the ink into which he had the presence of mind to dip it for the purpose, Selby unlocked the door, and received the note with an explanation that the bearer had been detained an hour or better, no servant having ventured to disturb him, until the time should arrive which he himself had specified.

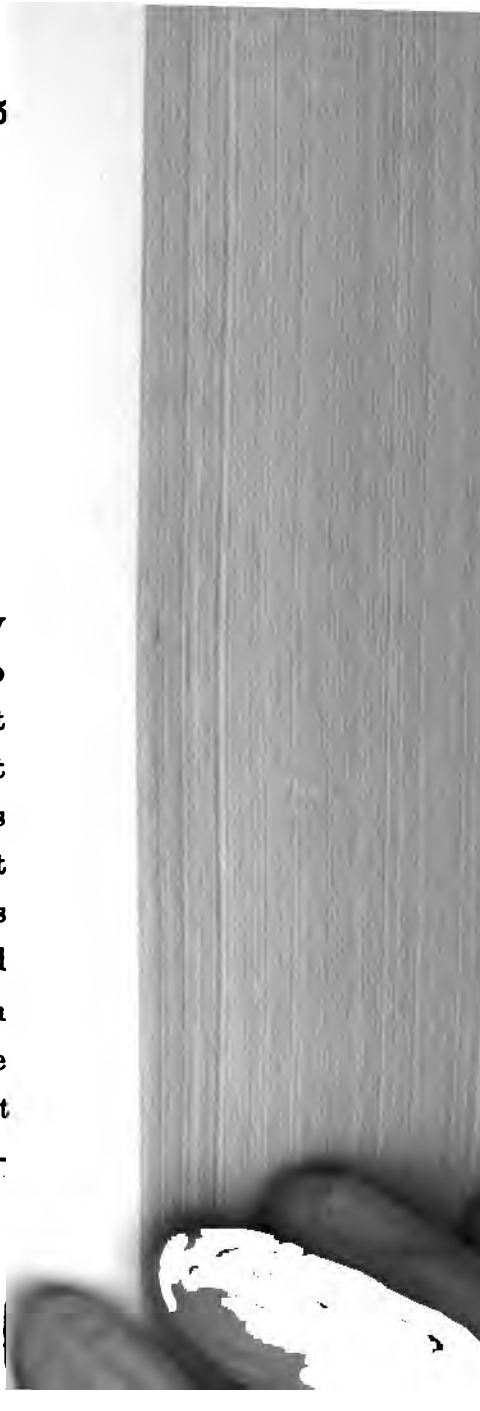
"It is well," answered he, when he had read the hasty scroll—"then will I not delay him any longer. Bid him say to his master, Lancelot, that Master Selby greets him, and will rejoice to see him at his own good convenience!" The man bowed, and withdrew; and the old man seated himself

ietly, and after a moment's thought,
ıe said, "ha!—now comes the
ıd without any further meditation,
sign of care, he took up the Eu-
of Æschylus, turned to the difficult
ure chorus at the 876th line; and
l methodised, and made notes as he
, some in the margin of the volume
d some in a large brass-bound vel-
ered book, labelled "Ephemeris
Variorum," as tranquilly as though
nothing of more immediate or pres-
gency upon his mind, than the
tion of a corrupt reading, or restora-
the true text. It was not affectation
as not even the result of an effort—
led to the force of ancient habit, and
minutes after the man had left him,
mpletely wrapped up in his subject,
l of archæology alone, and utterly
ıl of all sublunary matters; and so

remained, until he was again aroused to consideration of earthly things by the announcement of his cousin Chaloner. Of a truth was it said, that we are fearfully and wonderfully made!

CHAPTER IX.

hours at the least did Henry
remain closely engaged in deep
l conversation with his ancient
o, understanding well his difficult
e position, appreciated fully his
kindness. Henry did not affect
nent to conceal from him his
t the young cavalier was secreted
on the premises of Woolverton
he pretend to disapprove the
ich had led to such concealment
nuch he might regret the conse-



quences which he considered likely to arise therefrom. He showed the proclamation to Marc Selby, and did not hesitate to confess his own dislike to the duty imposed upon him, and his sincere wish that the young fugitive might escape, until such time as the government should be induced to remit somewhat of what he termed their cruel and unchristian rigour.

"At the same time," he said, "I have but the choice of two alternatives—to resign my commission and the command of this district, or to perform with strict accuracy all the duties thereby laid upon me. To resign, at present," he continued, "I do not think advisable, not as regards myself,—for that of course I should not at all consider,—but as regards the welfare of the country; for should I do so, some other would be at once appointed, who would, it is most likely, be harsher and more

than I—and much harm might
e of it. Now, cousin Selby, I am
ou know, a man of many words
professions, wherefore I shall go
o the point. I believe the young
e here, and in fact I am *forced* so
by these documents," and he laid
s he had received the night before
sk as he spoke.

e sincerely I may be mistaken—or,
taken, that I may be unable to dis-
ere you have hidden him, for it is
e that it will go very hard with
e shall be discovered here. I will do
power, should such be the case—
sure I need not promise you—to
the matter, and hope I may be able,
Cromwell, to provide for your
but, I speak plainly, cousin, with
evidence before me, I must order
—I must send for a detachment of

the soldiers to Low Barnsley, which is their nearest station—and I *must*, and pray believe me that I *will*, exert every faculty I may possess to capture the young man. I ask you no questions, nor wish to hear any answers, and I will not allow yourself or Mistress Alice to be at all interrogated. For the rest I must do my duty, and you will not, I am sure, think hardly of me, for so doing. I shall send off a messenger forthwith to Keating, with orders to bring hither two troops of the Ironsides to-morrow at daybreak;—till then I will remain with you myself, if you will give me quarters, and you will not, I fancy, find me a difficult or troublesome inquisitor."

"Oh! you are quite right, cousin, you are quite right in one thing," answered Selby, laughing good-humouredly, "you are quite right in one thing, though very wrong indeed in another. You must search the premises—that is quite clear—I

, from the very first—and indeed,
esire it, than otherwise, for I sup-
ı it is done and over, I shall be
ace; and until it is done by some
thority, I shall have no rest at all,
be worried day and night by these
gentry, and you know, Henry,
ery fond of worthies of your cloth.
t search the house, and the more
he better, for then you will be
yourself, and will be able to satisfy
o far you are quite right! But very
ndeed, I do assure you, when you
that you shall find any one hidden
or you will not, Henry, you will not,
ell you, how carefully you search
and howsoever much you may sus-
Of course I shall rejoice to have
y with me, and so will Alice—she
ne forth this morning to the village,
some medicaments, I fancy, and

some dainties to the poor old souls down there; but she'll be home to dinner, and after you have searched to-morrow, if you will ride out with her and see Gilbert Falconer's long-winged Norway hawks fly at a heronshaw, you'll please the girl, and the honest knave too,—in good faith you will,—but for me, I care not for such toys."

"Well, well!" said Chaloner, "I trust it may be as you say; for if I do not find any body, it will of course be all over, whether there be any body here or no!—but I beseech you do not depend too much on the secrecy of your devices—I have seen many of your old houses, and know the general plan of their concealments. From this very room, I dare say, if it were well examined, some avenue might be discovered —but as you say so, I presume I shall find no one, and I am sure I hope so. Now if you will permit me, I will write a brief

lonel Keating, to march hither
or two of horse to-morrow at
ne of my fellows can ride over
, and I will tell the others not
ard exactly, but to keep a peace-
n all that is going on to-night.
it will be needful to interrogate

ill get nothing, Henry, out of
omise you—meanwhile do just
l, till one of the clock, when
the hall below—if your own
vertired, send one of mine, good

rses are quite fresh," answered
as he moved towards the writing-
d now I will write to Colonel
ithout delay; and walk out when
spatched a fellow with it, to join
the park; I met her at the Stag's
I came, and wished then to escort

her homeward; but she was going further, and bade me join her in the park, when I had finished talking with you, down by the Heronry wood."

It did not occupy the young soldier many moments to finish the official note, and shaking his cousin affectionately by the hand, whom he both respected and loved as being the nearest relative he had on earth—his mother having died within a year of his birth, and his father having not long survived her,—he put on his hat and sauntered slowly through the long suite of rooms, now pausing to admire some rare painting or antique statue, now gazing out of the windows, across the courtyard and the moat, over the sunny park, which he could see stretching away for a mile and a half in length till it was bounded by the Heronry wood, and the deep narrow river—a rich and beautiful perspective. He was,

w in a very different mood from that
he paced the parlour-floor of the
ead; for the unconcerned manner
uire, and his reiterated assertion
person would be found concealed
all, had produced, and very na-
oo—for he well knew the strict
nd truth of the old man—a strong
n on his mind; and though he had
, that Master Selby did not posi-
ny the concealment, or assert that
s no one hidden, he was considera-
ted to believe that such was the
ndeed the very fact of his finding
far abroad, and seemingly so un-
s, had at the moment somewhat
his suspicions; and now, when he
in his thoughts to her calm smile
rless unembarrassed air, he could
ieve her privy to any scheme of

As he reached the oaken staircase, and passed slowly round the gallery on which it opened, he caught through the tall Gothic window another view of the grounds in the opposite direction—a view of much greater extent, including nearly three miles of open lawns with belts of timber trees, and deep withdrawing dells between them; these lying broad and fair in the mellow noontide lustre, those full of cool blue shadows, with here and there a rippling reach of the stream flashing among the thickets—all terminated far off to the westward by the park wall, and the gigantic range of elms, which screened it from the road. It was but a passing glance that he threw over the lovely landscape, for he had marked it oftentimes before, and was familiar with its beauties; but even in that transient glance his eye was arrested by two moving figures far off in the distance, which, distant as they were,

ed for Alice and her old at-

t quickened his movements, and
vn the broad easy steps calling
as he descended, so that one of
him from a side door as he
little hall at the stair-foot. He
gaged half a minute in giving
, in his own clear and precise
the servant, but passed onward
through the paved court and
den to the gate-house, intending
ice within a few minutes at the
ut very variable indeed, and
re the intents and resolutions of
and very liable to interruption
they appear the least so, and
ved in this instance;—for in the
an old woman, the wife of the
had known him from his child-
rd, came tottering out from the

lodge, and detained him a short time by a series of silly and disjointed, but kindly meant interrogations, which it was not in the heart of Chaloner to treat with neglect or coldness; and then, when he had got rid of this annoyance, and issued into the road through the park, whom should he see trotting up the avenue, but stout John Sherlock, on Wyvil's coal-black charger.

In a moment he remembered how he had directed the good yeoman to wait and speak with him; and how, forgetting all about what he had wished to say, he had ridden off afterward, leaving him asleep under the oak-tree. Again, therefore, he was obliged to pause in common courtesy; but he contrived to learn from honest John all that he had to tell concerning the horse, the place where he had found him, and his intention of consulting Master Selby as to the wisest method of disposing of him,

the loss of much more than a
of an hour; and then at length,
expressed his approbation of the
farmer's conduct, he set forth in
nest to join his beautiful cousin.
v tiresome," said he within himself,
roceeded on his way, "that I should
t so much time! She will be well-
ome ere this, and I shall get no
nity of talking with her after all!" but
ame time he stepped out at the top
peed, and had soon passed over two-
t least of the distance between the
nd the spot where, from the win-
he had seen Alice half an hour
When he had come thus far, with-
overing any signs of her he sought,
ing any sound of her voice, although
ped and listened once or twice, he
o grow uneasy, lest he should have
wrong path and missed her; for

it seemed to him that she ought to have been at least so far on her way homeward —if no farther. The spot on which he stood, as he thought thus, was in the bottom of a gentle sloping dell, planted with tall old beeches, quite free from any underwood, and carpeted, wherever the shadow of the thick foliage had not overpowered its growth, by soft and mossy greensward. At this point the path, which he had followed hitherto, separated into two branches —one leading straight on to the portion of which Alice had spoken, and the other winding away to the left hand toward the fishing-houses. Both of these paths, as he well knew, crossed the river on narrow rustic bridges at a few paces distance only, and wound through thickets and plantations so tortuously that it was not possible to see a person till you were quite close up with them.

e he was deliberating which of the
anches he had now better follow, a
reached his ears, which sent the
ushing through all his veins like
of hot lava—a long shrill piercing
—another! and another! in the well-
tones of the sweet girl of whom
in search. The cries proceeded
ly from the direction of the postern,
tering a shout in answer he dashed
through the trees, with speed
y inferior to that of a hunted stag.
bounds carried him across the little
, and up the acclivity beyond it; before
y the stream wheeling on, dark and
ut very narrow—not above twenty feet
utmost—between steep banks, spanned
single log which formed the foot-bridge.
he farther side was a stony ridge
d with stunted evergreens; and over
another small ravine feathered with

underwood and tufts of furze and broom, into which the path dived abruptly. Hence, as it seemed to him, the voice proceeded, and with another shout, which to his great surprise was answered faintly from behind him, he ran across the rugged arch, climbed the steep rocky brow, and plunged into the dell, half frantic with excitement.

Scarcely, however, had he made ten steps beyond the summit, before a sight met his eyes which would, if any thing, have forced him from his self-control. In the very bottom of the glen, prostrate upon the ground, with a tall ragged ruffian furiously and unmercifully belabouring him about the head with what resembled greatly the truncheon of a broken pike, lay the old servant Jeremy; and a little farther off, just where the ground rose on the other side, in the violent gripe of two savage-looking men, who by their dresses were evidently dis-

esperate marauders from the royal
pale as death itself, and trembling
mb, stood Alice Selby.

the wretches, who held her
sped by one delicate wrist, had
muzzle of a huge horse-pistol—
the ready eye of Chaloner ob-
n instant—within a hand's breadth
mples; and was, with loud and
precations, threatening her with
ath, if she spoke or resisted;—the
already torn a jewelled pendant
of her ears, and that so brutally
op or two of blood had fallen on
der; and, just as Chaloner came
attracted by a glittering brooch
ured her kerchief, he thrust his
s hand into the sanctuary of her
d by one violent effort dragged
the brooch and kerchief, rending
itself, and leaving all her snowy

bust exposed to their foul glances. So greedily were they occupied in their unholy calling, that the villains had not observed the repeated shout of Chaloner, and consequently he came on them quite unawares.

He was indeed upon the first, almost before he was aware of it himself, and rushing at a tremendous pace down the steep slope, drawing his rapier as he came, he kicked the brute, who was in the act of stooping over his groaning victim, head over heels into the broken gully among the stones and brushwood; and dashed on, without pausing to see what became of him, to succour the terrified girl, who seeing aid so near again sent forth one of those wild ear-piercing screams, which she had been deterred from uttering since the first moment of her peril, by menaces of instant death. Her shriek and the noise of their comrade's fall were the first intimations the other

d, that they were interrupted.
he pistol, diverting his aim in-
m Alice, levelled the weapon
eliberation at the young soldier's
pulled the trigger, when he was
eet from its muzzle.

for him, however, and yet more
whom he alone preserved from
l perhaps worse outrage, it had
ly overloaded, and recoiled so
at it threw up the hand which
r it had been correctly aimed,
vas, the ball pierced the crown
hat, actually grazing his hair in
. Before the ruffian had time
effect of his discharge, the point
r's sword was glittering between
r blades, while the guard knocked
breast-bone, so forcibly was the
en home; and with a fearful
he dropped to the ground—the

blood gushing from his mouth, and from the wide wound in his bosom, like water forced out of a pump. So rapidly did all this pass, that the wounded man was actually prostrate, before his comrade had unsheathed his broadsword; and when he did so, he was still so confused and startled, that parrying easily an ill-directed lounge, Henry was able to catch Alice round the waist, and rush back through the underwood, avoiding the place where the first ruffian was now struggling out of the ravine, toward the river.

He had hoped to be able to cross over, when he doubted not he should have little trouble in defending the narrow bridge, by which one only could pass at a time, until help should arrive; and he was confident that help was not far distant, from the shout which had so promptly responded to his own—but he was disappointed!—for he

y mounted the ascent, and reached
bank, when both the robbers were
sword in hand. To attempt to
the bridge, leaving his back ex-
uld have been insanity! Setting
precious charge, and bidding her
er life, while he kept the pass—he
uted at the pitch of his voice, and
id so was engaged instantly in
and encounter with two swords-

nen of that day were at all equal
Chaloner in the management and
of his weapon; and he derived
cool and collected disposition an
e hardly, if at all, inferior to his
the fence. Had only one of the
now opposed to him, been able to
im at a time, the affair would have
cided in ten seconds—but even a
f defence has his hands full enough

when attacked hotly by two tolerable fencers!—and such at least might be considered the bravoes, who now pushed at him with fierce savage oaths, encouraged by the hope of booty, and burning to avenge their comrade, and half maddened by despair and want. Even at this disadvantage, the brave young officer, would, it is probable, have proved still superior, had he fought with his wonted coolness; but now his eye wandered too often from the flickering points of the brandished rapiers, in pursuit of his cousin—and, when he saw her after staggering a few steps toward the bridge, sink down upon the grass in a dead faint, he was so much diverted from what he was about, that he received a thrust in the left breast that would have finished his career upon the spot, but that it glanced off from a button of his coat, inflicting a sharp wound as it grazed him, and running quite through

arm. The effusion of blood was
eat, although the sword-blade by
une had missed the artery, and the
t once saw their advantage.

t steady, Joe"—cried one—"for
-and he swore an oath too blas-
ly fearful to be written down—
eed away by inches, and we can
n at our leisure."

ccordingly they both assumed the
, menacing him it is true at times,
n edge and point, and at times pres-
back toward the river, but keep-
nd waiting the time when loss of
ould render him a weak and easy
Now he exerted every nerve, and
every feint and foin to tempt them
ir guard, and even succeeded in
blood from each, by turns, though
And now as he perceived the ad-
which they had gained, and which

they seemed so resolute to keep—and as h
felt his strength ebbing out drop by drop
and a chill sickening faintness gathering a
his heart—and no help drawing nigh—an
her he would have died to save lying ther
senseless and inanimate—a ready spoil t
those worse than brutes, as soon as h
should fall—a sensation nearly akin to th
cold dull agony of despair fell on hi
soul; still he fought undauntedly, and stil
they dared not to close with him; though
every moment he felt more and more tha
he could strive only a little longer—a ver
little longer.

Then to augment the wretchedness—i
any thing could indeed augment it—of hi
feelings, even at that moment of unutterabl
torture, as if in mockery of his situation, th
clear loud merry sound of the dinner-bel
came clanging through the sunny air from th
neighbouring hall,—telling of joy and mer

succour near at hand, yet really
ved from him as though it had
agues aloof. He felt it—felt it
l keenly—and, though he almost
rom exhaustion, knowing that
d on himself, he lounged with
tuous thrusts, raising once more
hout as his quivering lips could

en!—the shout was answered—
d rang the cry—a loud stento-
from the beech covert, and the
tramp of a horse at full gallop.
you, Joe—in with you, man!"
he ruffian, who had spoken
rust at him, both at once!"—
lid so again and again; and at
pass again wounded him. Still
his guard, and feebly answered
hing clamour.
w, bareheaded, in fierce haste,

lashing the fiery Arab to yet more fier
speed, Sherlock drove up the hill beyon
the river. The men looked doubtfully
one another; yet still, although dispirite
pressed on!

"Damn it—don't give up now!"—th
man who had not spoken hitherto, now crie
with terrible malignity. "Finish this fo
at once!—the other has no arms, and befo
he can dismount and cross the bridge, w
can get off, and bear her with us!"

"Revenge!"—the other answered, wit
a yet fiercer rush on Chaloner, than any h
had ventured yet to make; but the assu
rance of prompt aid had reinvigorated th
ebbing strength of Henry, and he not onl
parried his thrust completely, but lounge
in his turn, and gave his assailant a shar
wound in the shoulder. The ruffians ha
moreover counted without their host; fo
Sherlock never once thought of dismoun

lrew the rein at all, nor checked
dering gallop of Wyvil's black
No! not he! he flung his hat,
ch he had been thrashing the
sides in lack of a better goad,
to the air, and setting himself firmly
ddle, charged with a wild shrill
t the perilous leap. Bravely the
ıte drove at it—with his expanded
ed as fire, and his wide eyeballs
vith a keen spark of vicious light-
vely he drove at it, with the
it seemed, of a whirlwind, the
nsward, literally shaking beneath
ıs gallop—not a second did he
! not the twinkling of an eye!
eer verge. The treacherous turf,
xtreme brink, yielded, broke in,
fore feet—but it was all too late! a
ıe was seen sweeping through the
hen alighted with a stern dint on

the rocky ridge, amid a cloud of dust an
fire, ground from the flinty surface by h
heels!

"Hurrah!" screamed the excited ye
man. "Hurrah! surrender, ye black thieve
or ye are but dead men!—and, as he spok
reining his horse up by the side of Henr
he plucked one of the empty pistols fro
his holster and levelled it. "Down wit
your arms"—but the sight was all sufficien
Seeing that Sherlock had no sword, an
judging from his dress that he was a me
countryman, they had persisted even aft
his bold leap; but when they saw th
motion of his hand toward the holster, the
took at once to their heels, one even throw
ing away his sword, and dashed into th
scattered bushes, flying in mortal terror.

The farmer's blood was up, and thoug
unarmed he would have still pursued; bu
Henry called him to desist, and lend h

stress Alice. Water was soon
rom the stream, and after two
eep sighs, and a long fluttering
he returned to her senses, and
to a full appreciation of her
of her cousin's gallantry in her
a few moments a bandage was
he young soldier's wounded arm;
ck undertaking to carry the poor
, who still remained insensible
rrible beating he had undergone,
he black horse by the postern;
d people to look after the slain
young pair crossed the bridge
l homeward, both affected beyond
of speech, one by the intensity
ited feelings acting on a debili-
m, the other by the conflicting
f joy and gratitude, and terror.

CHAPTER X.

Long before they reached the hall, however, they were met by several domestics, who had come forth to seek them, or who, seeing the abruptness with which Sherlock had wheeled his horse out of the carriage-road, and galloped across the park, had suspected some peril to their young mistress, and rushed out, although too late, to her assistance. Manifold were the exclamations of wonder, pity, and dismay that fell from their lips as they beheld the testimonies of her danger in the rent sleeve and

ess of her bold protector, and
few words what had passed; but
prevailed in their minds, and
r all other sentiments. Two or
were armed—for a park-keeper
musketoon was one of the num-
falconer with hawking-pole and
—started immediately in pursuit
lent ruffians who had dared to
r beloved lady within the very
f her own grounds; others ran by
gate to meet the worthy farmer,
heir aid to the old major domo
nd many others hurried back to
to collect weapons of all sorts
the country round, and all the
ng woodlands, determined at all
o seize and punish the marau-

ile old Master Selby, having
aware, by the bustle and running

to and fro, that something more than common was in progress, had come down from his library, and learning there, not without some exaggeration, what had taken place, rushed out, bareheaded as he was, in more than mortal terror. Words cannot paint the deeper and more powerful emotions of the human mind; at best they can but feebly image to our senses the external signs of the strange workings constantly in process within that fiercest of volcanoes—the secret heart of man. A deep flush shot across the high and pallid forehead of the father, and the big drops rushed out like summer rain from those eyes long unused to weep at any earthly sorrow, as he clasped to his bosom, full of thoughts far too deep for speech, his innocent and lovely child; while she, with like emotion, clung to his close embrace, and wept in silence within the sheltering

f the frail arms which trembled as
ssed her.

sed be God!"—he faltered forth at
-"my child—my own child!" and
e words kissing her pale fair brow,
endered her to the care of her
, and turned to grasp, with scarce
energy of love and gratitude, the
f her defender. "And thou," he
Henry, thou too!—thou that hast
en my affectionate kinsman and true
e now and henceforth for ever, be
!"—and he drew him to his aged
and held him for a moment there,
nself speechless from the very force
th of his feelings.

scenes like this must from their
ture have speedy terminations; and,
h in that instance all the spectators
d freely sympathized with the emo-
the actors, though there was no

broad glare of idiot curiosity, no sneer of apathetic, dull brutality, to jar on the nerves attained to so high a pitch; it was—as always is the case with spirits of a sensitive and elevated order—with a sense of something nearly akin to shame, that on recovering from their ecstasy, they withdrew from the gaze—too near, though it was friendly, of the small group which stood in mute attention round them.

It was some time before any of the three were again visible. Henry was borne off to a chamber which from his childhood upward had been set apart to his use and designated by his name; and then his hurts were looked to with a solicitude that could not be surpassed, and with a degree of skill, which, although often found in those days possessed by persons not professional, would now be looked for only in a regular surgeon of high practice. Alice retired, with her

to the seclusion of her own apart-
and it was not a little while before
uld control her agitated feelings
to reflect with any degree of calm-
the dangers she had that day under-
much less to bring down her mind
r matters, equally at least—if not
pressing.

noontide meal passed that day,
first time at Woolverton in many
years, unhonoured by the presence
member of the family; and those
ere collected round the ample board,
ghest servants namely of the house-
nstead of displaying, by an increase
ty or any show of boisterous merri-
heir freedom from restraint imposed
e presence of superiors—as would
lly be the case nowadays — were
and more silent than their wont,
ven downcast, if not sad, in the ex-

pression of their homely features. Th
afternoon passed dully—the arrival of th
servants headed by Sherlock bearing o
their shoulders the still senseless body
the old butler, tending in no degree to pr
duce any alteration in the feelings of th
merrier—so severe were the injuries, an
so critical the state of the faithful servit
—that, his case evidently requiring ski
far beyond that of the housekeeper, fame
though she was through all the parish
about for the rare virtue of her simple
an express was sent off to Long Darrinfor
a little country-town some five miles di
tant, for Doctor Troubridge, who, on h
coming, gave an opinion, guarded indee
and far from positive, that he would pai
fully and tediously recover. Having a
ministered a soothing potion to his fa
patient, whose first entrance into this wor
of pains and sorrows he had witnessed

ing honoured with his approba-
slings and bandages wherewith
—as he always called her—worthy
Trueman had accumulated Henry's
which he refused to remove or
backed his short-legged round-
cob and trotted soberly off be-
is well-stuffed saddle-bags to the
of some poor sufferer at ten or
iles' distance.

after his departure Alice sent down
ge to her father praying that he
visit her forthwith, and on his
he dismissed her women; and they
l for more than two hours alone
and anxious conversation. At the
this period, having apparently re-
quite from the trepidation and
sment which had been the natural
ences of her morning's terror, and
only by an unusual paleness

of her pure delicate complexion that a
thing uncommon had befallen her, she
scended, leaning on her father's arms to t
library, where she lay down upon t
cushioned ottoman which filled the emb
sure of the deep window, and soon fell i
a calm and gentle slumber,—the old m
watching over her with almost pain
tenderness.

Meanwhile the sun set calmly in t
west, and his last rays ceased to gild t
sere tops of the lofty forest-trees wh
sheltered the old mansion, and the hoa
cawings of the homeward rooks were he
no longer;—but in Marc Selby's library
lamp was lighted that night, nor did
pore over his favourites of bygone a
immersed as he was for a little while
a more anxious study, as he hung o
his fair child—sole idol of his withe
heart—still sleeping in so tranquil and

tupor, so ashy white withal, and
urally calm in the expression of
at but for the faint fluttering
her sweet bosom, it might have
aken for that long trance whose
cold grave, whose wakening is
Suddenly, some few moments
st echo of the last chime of the
house, as it struck eight o'clock,
o utter silence, she sat up, wide
instant, and perfectly collected
iet tones of her tuneful voice
ond doubt. "Father," she said,
now become quite dark. "Are
ther?"

' replied the old man. "I am
r head, and have not moved
ling, since first you seemed to
v fare you, dearest, now?"

vell," she answered cheerfully,—
well, father—my long sleep has

refreshed me, and I am now as strong a
well as ever. I have not—I trust—sl
over long—the hour has not passed, has
Oh! father—dear, you should have rou
me sooner."

"Nay, nay! be not alarmed," replied
father; "be not alarmed without cau
Alice. The clock has but this mom
stricken eight, and Launcelot hath not
announced supper. I will call now
lights, and then go down to the hall.
shall forbid that any of the household en
in hither, lest they disturb your slumb
Compose yourself again for a while, a
then you may fulfil your purpose."

"Well—if it must be so! Yet, father
do feel no small repugnance to visit t
young gentleman alone, so far removed, t
from all earthly witnesses."

"It *must* be so, my Alice—it must be
however," answered he. "Already once

as I wellnigh found absent, when so found would have been utter ruin. ver, dearest child, the force of circum- is vast; and that which would in se be judged, and rightly judged, un- ly and forward, becomes in another ost natural thing in the world. He a villain, too! such as earth has held, nor heaven looked down upon, ould even dream of wronging you."

n no! no, father," replied Alice, a deep mantling all her lovely features, "I even thought of that. I only feared might seem to him, as you have said, denly and overbold."

ver strive *you* to act rightly, child," d man answered, "as with your up- soul and pure heart you will, I fear way—and never heed what this man t woman think or say of it. If they e-minded and noble, why then they

will judge candidly and nobly—if othe
then it matters not how they regard it."

"Well, father," she replied, "I will
visit him anon. Tell me, I pray you, whe
you have hid the basket!"

"It is within the passage, Alice," he r
plied, "and a light burning. Tarry a whi
and listen on your return, before you cor
in hither, lest Chaloner should quit h
chamber, and seek to find you here. Fa
well, dear child, and linger not overlon
Once more, as he ceased speaking, he fold
her to his breast, whispered a gentle ble
ing, and, without waiting any further a
swer than the pure kiss which melted
his lips, left her alone in the dim twilig
chamber. For some time afterward she d
not move at all from the couch on whi
she had been leaning, but continued in de
and painful meditation, reluctant to set fort
upon her self-elected duty, to which—no

first excitement and novelty of the
re had passed away—she felt her-
tted by something of timidity and
ess, which she had never expe-
at any time before so heavily op-

st, manning herself as it were with
n courage, she started to her feet
not perhaps daring to trust her own
s any longer, lest they should quite
er her firmness; and opening the
d door, not without some embar-
, hurried into the vaulted passage,
the entrance carefully behind her.
not occupy her many minutes to
with her light step and ready know-
f her way, the intricacies of that
hiding-place, and she was at the
or of the secret chamber before she
rly collected her thoughts for the
aded, half-desired interview. One

little moment she paused at the door, her cheek suffused with a deep crimson flush, and her heart throbbing with such convulsive violence, that she felt quite exhausted, and at the point of fainting. She rallied, however, instantly, and tapping the panel very gently, "Open," she uttered, in her low soft voice, "Open to me, Captain Wyvil—It is I only, Alice Selby!"

The instant she spoke a hurried step sounded within, the bolts were withdrawn, the door was thrown open, and the young soldier led his bright hostess to a seat, pouring forth all the while such protestations of eternal gratitude, couched in words so feelingly yet simply eloquent, and those words uttered too in tones so rich, so full of manly melody, that no created ear of woman but must have given them heed.

"Oh! how—how may I ever prove," he said; "how speak in living language the

f what I feel, dear lady? Words
ot tell—the human heart itself may
comprehend its own deep feelings.
not I owe life, and more than
your calm gentle courage—to your
ympathy with the good cause—to
ave, generous, self-oblivion?"

not, I pray you, Captain Wyvil,'
lied, her presence of mind having
ack to her at once, when the first
s taken; "Do not, I pray you, put
he blush by praises that savour more,
of courtly *politesse*, than of hard-
l honest truth. I should imagine
t spoke in mockery, did not your
y forbid construction so ungentle; for
I did nothing that any other lady
have doubted to do in like circum-
for any of the gallant soldiers who
o faithfully done battle for King
."

"Most natural it is that you should deem so, lady, seeing that the pure and noble hearted ever, till sad experience has taught them the reverse, believe the souls of others to be all truth and honour and high generosity; and find in every thing about them so strong does their undoubted fancy work a clear reflected portrait of their own in born worth. But trust me, lady, when thou didst step forth boldly to succour the distressed and flying stranger, ten would have fled in selfish terror, leaving him to the mercy of his bitterest foeman. When thou didst take no thought of self at all in sympathy for one thou didst not even know save as a fellow-being, ten would have taken no thought else. Nay, more! of the few nobler spirits, who would have aided—had the time been given for calm deliberate action—half would have doubted, till the occasion had gone by—half, pitied merely

ed till too late—or had they even
act at all, would so have acted,
y, fear, and trepidation, that all
discovered and rendered useless!
ear lady, no! it may not be de-
owe life itself to your kind sym-
our decision, energy, and courage!
hat I have seen my fair deliverer,
r untold worlds be free from that
gation. Henceforth, for ever I am
ur bondsman, your sworn soldier,
lave!"

—be it as you will, sir," answered
h a calm smile. "It cannot but
greeable to me to know myself in
ie saviour of a human life; and if
eem it, I cannot be so churlish as
your thanks. Meanwhile, as it
essary that you should be a pri-
some days yet in this dark den,
ought you some trifles whereby to

make your time pass the less gloomily—some waxlights, books, and wine; and I must tell you now, ere I forget it, that fresh search will be made for you betimes to-morrow. My father has instructed you how to avoid your enemies, and you shall not want timely notice—but one thing has occurred to me, which I believe my father had forgotten; you must not bar the door within, and the key must be left without. Forget not this, I do beseech you, else will all our endeavours be lost labour. And now," she added, taking up her basket, the contents of which she had deposited upon the table during the conversation, "now I will bid you farewell; I fear I may be missed, an if I tarry longer."

"Oh, go not yet—go not yet, lovely mistress Alice," exclaimed the young man passionately, rising up from his chair, as if to detain her; "you do not know, you can-

ream, how wearisome, how terrible
g it is, for one used from his boyhood
the free liberal air, to the broad face
sunlighted heavens, to the green love-
of earth, to be pent here taking no
f time, without so much as a stray
to bear him company, day after day,
after night, in solitude and sadness.
not yet, I do beseech you! Linger
while to make this gloomy cell ra-
by your bright presence. You know
or can fancy, how I have watched,
ayed, and panted for this interview—
have dreamed all night, and pondered
day, on the sweet half-seen features
, my guardian angel. How I have
l forth the words in which I would
y my deep gratitude, my deathless
—and now that the long-wished mo-
has arrived, my tongue clings faulter-
my jaws—my spirit finds no voice to

give its feelings utterance. Oh! go not, lady, I beseech you. Who is there that should miss you, as you say, saving your excellent father?"

"My cousin, sir, who is now with us as our guest—my cousin, Henry Chaloner."

"What," exclaimed Wyvil, hastily; "what! Chaloner, the rebel major-general, whose leading of the horse at Marston contributed so fatally to the success of Cromwell—who fought by Fairfax' side at Naseby, and was the first to cross the Team at Worcester? Can it be such an one who shares the hospitality of Woolverton?"

"Even so, Captain Wyvil," answered Alice, not altogether pleased by his manner, "even so—Henry Chaloner, my father's honoured cousin, and the defender of his daughter's honour!"

"Oh now, I have offended you," cried Marmaduke, "offended you, I fear, past

of pleasing any more. And yet I
but thoughtlessly, and from a passing
t's irritation—the pardonable irrita-
f a defeated soldier against his more
ful rival—but had I known, dear
ad I at all suspected how high this
oldier stands in your fair esteem, then
had I died than breathed a thought
him."

y! now you misinterpret me," she
ed quietly, but blushing deeply as she
"since Henry Chaloner was nought
before this day, except my father's
and my good kinsman; and if I did
his nobleness of mind, his singleness
pose, his perfect truth, and dauntless
e, yet more did I regret the strange
nation which had induced him to
alities so fair and good unto a cause
ck, so impious, and unholy! But
Chaloner has this day bound my

soul with obligations which must endure fo
ever"—and simply, but with deep feeling
she told him the events of the forenoon, he
peril from the ruffian cavaliers, and her bol
rescue by the puritan leader.

High coloured Wyvil's cheek, keen flashe
his eye, as she proceeded; and when sh
told how they had torn the ear-rings fro
her lacerated ears, and placed the muzzle
the pistol to her brow, he started to hi
feet and half unsheathed his rapier, mutte
ing through his close set teeth—"Villains—
accursed villains!"—But when she spoke
Henry's daring onset, of his encounter sin
gle-handed against the two marauders,
his wound, and her fainting-fit, and of Joh
Sherlock's late arrival on the field, he bi
his lip till the colour faded from it quit
and while his face grew pale as death.

"Happy man! Happy," he exclaime
"indeed; thrice happy! Oh that it ha

mine, so to do in your cause—and so, to have died there and then. For although the jewel—the all inestimable —of your love had been surrendered Chaloner—regret had still been mine, sweet meed of kind and sorrowful rance. But woe is me! Fortune er yet the friend of Wyvil!"

the deep red flush shot over the w of Alice, and she frowned slightly, voice was very cold, and almost she replied—"Nay, Captain Wyvil, u are overbold, to speak to me of Toys such as these, sir, suit not so quaintance as that which rests be- us; nor should I like them better, we were better known. When next d a visitant, my father shall wait on

no!" cried Marmaduke, impetu- ringing forward, and throwing him-

self at her feet, so as to grasp the hem
her garment. "No, no! you must not q
me so—oh! not in anger thus—not in c
tempt, sweet lady. Pardon me—pardon
beseech you; for I am quick of speech, a
have been ever but too prone to speak
promptings of a heart, too warm perh
and ardent, but neither obstinate, beli
me, nor wilful in offending—pardon me, a
revoke that cruel sentence; and say t
you will visit me again, and cheer the h
less prisoner's solitude with some br
gleams of bliss!"

"Rise, sir, rise, I beseech you. I do
lieve you think me indeed a country g
and a most silly one too, that you rave th
and mouth it. Rise," she continued, sm
ing, she scarce knew why, at the evid
sincerity of his emotion, "and we will p
good friends."

Then without further words he rose, a

to the door, and bowed respectfully
er hand, and raising it a little, just
l it with his lips as she departed,
, in a half-choked voice, that pas-
sad sound, "Farewell!" Alice raised
eyes to his face—for her life she
ot have done so!—but trembled
y in every limb of her fair body, as
rdance with the fashion of the day
d her unresisting hand. She knew
it was she trembled; she knew not
was she could not meet the glance of
brilliant eye—she was unconscious
ause for shame, for fear, for any
emotion—yet was she moved, and
! But when, just as she closed the
e cast a furtive glance between her
t lids toward the cavalier, she saw
nding in attitude of deep dejection,
s arms hanging idly by his side, and
head, with its long silky lovelocks,

drooping despondently upon his breast. She marked, and marvelled at this singular display of feeling, and with a fluttering heart full of a hundred wild and whirling fantasies, she hastened back, locking the door behind her; and reached the quiet library all agitated and quite breathless, and resumed her seat on the sofa, ere any one had discovered, or even suspected, her absence.

It was not, however, destined that she should pass even the few remaining hours of that eventful day without some further agitation, for she had not been many minutes in the library before her cousin entered having his left arm in a silken sling, and looking somewhat pale from loss of blood although he walked quite firmly, with his fine form erect and graceful as its wont. A servant came in with him bearing a lighted lamp with several burners, which having placed upon the table, he at once withdrew

hile he was yet in the room, Alice
rung up from the sofa, and, darting
d, seized Henry by the unwounded
and, exclaiming, as she did so, "Oh!
so rejoiced—so more than glad and
to see you thus again, dear, gallant
! for I had feared that you were very
urt; and had any thing befallen you,
could have pardoned myself at all,
as owing altogether to my silly weak-
fainting at the very moment when I
o have been most collected. It was
most weak and childish, but in truth
adly frightened. And are you not
hurt, Henry?"

! no," he answered, gazing with an
stic eye upon her beautiful pale face;
no, not hurt at all; it is a mere
which would not have disabled me
least, had it not bled so copiously,
made me too something faint, which

is far weaker in a soldier, you know, Alice and more shameful than in a pretty lady who is entitled, if she please, to faint at least three times a day in mere caprice and wantonness. But you are not, I know, one of these gew-gaw puppets of the court, who die away at a warmer ray than common our mild English sun, and shiver at the least breath of the fresh breezy air—you are not one of these, but my own sweet and gentle cousin, whom I hope one day," he continued, dropping his voice to a lower and more tender tone, "to call by a yet dearer title. *May* I hope, Alice?"

For a single moment, so suddenly did the surprise come on her, every drop of blood in her veins appeared to rush at once into her face, but in an instant it was gone, and she pale as death even to her lips, and icy-cold, and shivering, that her teeth almost chattered. "Alas!" cried

uite alarmed at the effect of his
las! I have been all too rash
I should have recollected,
, how your nerves have been
this morning's terror—forget it,
t it altogether, or think of it no
a fitter season"—and as he
upported her to the sofa whence
sen on his entrance; and knelt
holding her hand in his, and
soothe her by every soft and deli-
ion, entreating her to rest, and
nswer for the present to his ill-
ess—but after she had lain a
two on the soft cushions, she
, and collecting herself with an
e very firmly. "No! no!" she
st speak now—must answer fully
ry, your words have pained me
y."
cannot—no! you cannot be

offended"—Chaloner interrupted her, b
before he could finish his sentence, she
her turn broke in. "Oh not offended—b
pained—grieved—saddened—yes! ma
me sick at heart—sick at heart for yo
Henry, and sorry—ay! almost doubt
for myself. But, Henry, Henry," she co
tinued, increasing in vehemence as she p
proceeded, "as God is now my witne
and shall hereafter be my judge, I nev
dreamed of this, oh! never! never!—a
now that it has broken on me all
once—oh! it is very sad and terrible—
I will not attempt those frail and comm
place, and, as I think, insulting modes
consolation, which worldly girls may of
to court lovers—and though I nev
dreamed you loved me, other than as yo
cousin, your good little Alice, to whom y
have at all times been so kind and gent
now that I do know it, I also know wh

ointed love must be, to such a heart
rs—a heart, which if it love at all,
ve devotedly, and with its all of energy
e. I feel what it must be to tell you
ou must not even hope—and feeling
ge Henry, judge how I must suffer,
I must by my words blight, for a
least, the promised happiness of one
—besides that I love him most
as a true friend, a valued, proved,
insman, has this day saved my life,
ore! my honor, at fearful peril of
n! What must I suffer, Henry,
g that I must give him evil for his
and kill *his* hopes, who has given
ne?"

Alice—Alice"—answered Chaloner
nk not of that one moment!—do not
ot, I pray you, fancy for one moment
ur poor kinsman is so mean, so truly
spirit as to build any claim on what

the humblest varlet in your household would have done gladly without guerdon and thought of it, when done, but as h own good fortune. The little service I di you this forenoon, had nothing in the worl to do with what I said to you but now; sav that it set me thinking—made me conside how wretched I should have been, had not been in time to save you—and by fillin my whole heart full of warm thoughts, a unchained and run-riot, led me to speak i words, what I have long since felt in silenc For the rest I am in your hand—do wit me as you think the best—the happiest fo us both."

"That I must do, although it rend ou hearts within us for the moment, and leav them sore, it may be, and tender to the touc of passion, for many a day hereafter. But must not, dear Henry, I must not do myself- do thee so foul a wrong, as to let any doubt

eel, or any hope remain, beyond
nt. The truth is, Henry, I cannot
wife—it is impossible—I *cannot*!
ou all regard, all friendship, all
cannot give you love. Honouring
qualities of soul—your perfect
ur noble upright candour, the
of your spirit, your fearlessness,
ur, your renown—admiring your
ellect, your deep unworldly wis-
ng your gentleness, your kindness,
itiful good heart—yet, Henry, yet
ve you, love you as *you* should—
ved by her who calls you husband,
love the man, to whom I give, not
only, but my whole heart and
soul here and for ever, I am a
girl, dear cousin; the spoiled wild
my widowed father—and it may
him—my tutor, and almost my
t I have caught strange fantasies

—become a muser from my childhood, an
a day-dreamer—a lover of wild haunts an
wilder legends, a creature of romance an
poesy and fancy—gifted, I fear me, with
dower which tends not to the growth
real and substantial bliss, I cannot lov
unless my fancy have been won, and m
heart through that fancy. I grieve for yo
dear cousin, I grieve for you with my whol
strength — and likewise for myself — fo
why I know not, there is a something he
within, that whispers me with solem
augury the pain which I now give anothe
shall be mine own hereafter—the bitte
hard, cold anguish of unrequited love.
shall know nothing more of happiness unt
I see you happy."

"At least, dear Alice" — Chalone
answered — "at least you shall see m
calm. You have dealt by me nobly; an
never—never will I forget your goodnes

am not grieved and sorrow-
r decision, were to say what is
Heaven be praised! I have a
mforter on high—a hope that will
e be cast down by any mortal
comforter, whose consolations
nigh, when they are needed most,
are breathed vainly on the heart.
before we part, for this has been
ng day, for both of us, and with
ow perchance will come new
let me say to you, that you shall
a friend, a counsellor, a guard,
nder, while life is warm in this
m. Never fear, Alice, never fear
me for aid, advice, or friendship;
nat by so doing you will awaken
s, or call forth old presumptions,
I understand your sentiments, I
for the wealth of Eldorado dis-
even tenour, or move you any

more to so sad thoughts as these. Promise me this—will you not, cousin Alice?"

"Indeed I will—indeed I will—dear Henry"—she replied, her beautiful blue eyes swimming with tearful tenderness. "There is no one upon earth, on whom I would call half so willingly, with half so true a trust, and now," she added stretching out her fair hand to him, "good night, and blessings be about your head and peace for ever."

He caught the proffered hand, and held it for a moment, wistfully gazing in her face; then as if by a sudden and irresistible impulse snatched her to his bosom, and strained her there while he pressed a long cold kiss upon her snowy forehead. "Pardon" he said, as he released her,—"Pardon, it is the last—the last—oh! Heaven!" and in a burst of feelings most unaccustomed

at self-restrained and philosophic spirit,
shed from the apartment, and was seen
ore that evening by any inmate of the

CHAPTER XI.

At a very early hour of the following morning, before the household had assembled to their first meal, the trumpets of a squadron were heard in the park; and very shortly afterward the clatter of hoofs mixed with the sharper clash of their accoutrements, ringing and clashing, with the speed at which they rode, came nearer yet and nearer on the soft morning air, and only ceased at length when four or five troops of the Ironsides halted before the gate of the courtyard. Scarcely, however,

ey halted, before Chaloner came out
o meet them, and having held brief
nce with Colonel Keating, their com-
r, and seen above a hundred of the
ismounted and drawn up round the
each within gunshot of the other,
the officers through the parterre into
use itself, the other troopers remain-
the court till further orders. This
he visit of the soldiery was orderly
villy conducted; for Keating, who
me out at their head in person, was
a gentleman of old and honourable
and had borne arms in Germany and
w countries with good repute, before
il war in England; and he had, in
ance with a hint from Chaloner,
l the more polished of his subalterns
day's expedition.

as they were admitted to the hall,
eakfast bell rang out, and all the

household was assembled, the Ironsides receiving a request that they would partake of the hospitalities of Woolverton before proceeding to their duties. Alice had not, as yet, descended from her bower, though all the rest were seated, when Henry Chaloner with several officers in full costume, with their long broadswords clanking in their iron scabbards, and their spurs jinkling on the oaken floor, joined the domestic group; but in a few minutes she too entered, looking a little paler than her wont, and very simply dressed, a few stray ringlets only of her rich sunny hair escaping from a plain lace cap which covered her whole head, and her form somewhat shrouded in a loose morning-robe of grave sad-coloured satin—but still so lovely, that even the rude officers of the parliamentarian army were moved by the grace and quiet dignity of her appearance, and rose at once to greet

r. But little conversation passed during
e morning meal, and even that little was
strained and uneasy in its nature, and
vague and general in its topics; so that
as perhaps a relief to all parties, when
company arose from the table, and
oner announced to Selby his intention
roceeding with the search forthwith.

The quicker things of this nature are
ght to a close the better; so we will
e no time in empty compliments, but
on straightway to the point. Now,
nel Keating, order in, if you please, one
, dismounted, with their carbines—the
nay form an outer cordon in the park,
out the ring of sentinels. Now, cousin
," he continued, "will it please you to
nate a chamber where all the house-
may be held in ward, until our search
ed. Yourself and Mistress Alice, will
s I doubt not your company in the
oom above."

"As you will, cousin," answered Selby "but as I told you yesterday you are giving yourselves much needless trouble, for surely you will find no man here, but we, who are even now assembled. As for the rest there can no better spot be chosen, than this same dining-hall—you see it has but two doors and you can place a sentinel at each, either inside or out, as you think best,—my daughter and myself will, as you have suggested, wait your convenience in my study."

"Be it so," Chaloner replied, "now Colonel Keating, if you will take my counsel you will detail a small guard with a lance-pesade in the court-yard without, and post a cornet, or lieutenant, at either of these doorways, letting none have egress or entrance. You will then take your men, and search the whole house thoroughly; taking especial care to do no damage, and replacing whatever furniture or hangings you may be forced to move from their position. Look

pecially for sliding panels, false chim-
cks, moveable pictures, and the like,
may give access, and do often, in
old tenements as this, to hidden
es and chambers wrought in the
ess of the wall—be diligent I pray
nd leave no means untried to find
ou suspect to be the case. Should
ant any aid or counsel, I will await
Master Selby's library—should you
r aught, pray summon me. Here
keys of all the chambers, which my
iend has voluntarily given up to me
will post a small party at every
r and landing place, that the con-
malignants, if there be any here—
I doubt much—may not dodge to
, and so escape you. I deem it best
ould commence here in this parlour
now we will be no check on your
ents."

As he ceased speaking, he offered hi
hand to Alice and led her, with the old ma
following them, to the small cheerfu
chamber, wherein so many of the events-
which it has been our lot to trace—oc
curred; and there the trio seated aroun
the fire, conversed on ordinary topics a
calmly and contentedly as though no searc
involving life and death were going o
within the walls; as though two of th
three, who sat there seemingly so happ
had not their hearts pierced to the ver
core, by strong and passionate emotion
Such is proverbially, however, the cours
of all things human! such the deceitful an
false semblance of the world! where hardl
aught is real, saving the sin and sorrow tha
lurk beneath the specious glitter—the fo
and tinsel—of that thin gew-gaw tissu
which men think fit to term society! Tw
hours perhaps passed thus, or somethin

more, when Keating with two subalterns came in—a dozen privates halting at the door—saying that, after a most strict and tedious search, no place had been discovered wherein a mouse could find concealment.

"This chamber searched then, all our work is ended," Chaloner answered. "But now my task commences. Now, my good cousin, may I request you to remove the panel, which hides the secret passage. Let your men fetch some torches, if they have got none with them, and look well to their weapons, Colonel Keating, and to the priming of their carabines. So you will not disclose it? Well, it was only to spare time I asked you! Here, lancepesade, jump on those steps, and take out all the volumes, which fill that third compartment—the third there from the window! I saw you open it once, Master Selby, many long years ago, when you thought no one marked you. There that is it—now tarry," and stepping up to the identical place, where

the nail-heads and screws, which work
the springs within, were all made clea
visible, by the removal of the books,
began to tamper with them, and, after so
considerable time, succeeded, so that
portion of the wall revolved, and the mo
of the low passage was disclosed to
greedy gaze of the fierce Ironsides.

"Now will we soon see what is hidd
give me a torch, and light a dozen mo
leave three men at the entrance, Colo
Keating! you and the others follow;"
with the words Chaloner drew his rap
and entered the dim vault, the soldiers ru
ing after him, with brandished swords,
blazing flambeaux, rejoicing, as it seem
already in contemplation of some valua
capture. Far stretched those long
devious corridors, through many a nook
labyrinthine angle, up steep long flig
of stairs, down long and gradual desce
with many a false turn leading their st
astray and ending in dead walls, or guid

ck to the spot whence they came—
the light of day—full of the garnered
obwebs, and filth of ages—the
ere so dense with foul and noxious
that the lights waned, and some
t, and all burned blue and ghastly—
with staunch indomitable perseve-
e soldiers struggled onward. Guards
n posted here and there at all the
f intersection, so that, when at the
reached the chamber, having been
s of an hour in traversing a distance
Alice knowing the real clue would
complished easily within ten minutes,
ere but four of the privates left
enry and the three officers.

we have reached the citadel at
said Chaloner, "and lo! the key
outside, suspended to the staple;
t we have but lost our time and

unlocked the door as he spoke, and
the little cell, which had the night

before been Wyvil's hiding-place; but now it was all vacant and deserted—no food, or raiment—no light, or other token of any human visitant was to be found in its narrow precincts—the bed, the board, the stools, the shelves against the wall, and the few articles that were piled on them, were covered with the thick white dust, as it appeared, of centuries; feathers, and bits of flock, and clots of matted cobwebs were scattered over all the floor and walls—and in the brazier were a pile of cold white ashes, which, as the disappointed soldiers swore, had not been lit these ten years. The other doors stood open; and for form's sake alone—for all were now convinced that no one was concealed at all within the building—those passages were likewise searched, but this was speedily accomplished; and when they found that the first staircase ended abruptly in the well, which has been heretofore described, and that the doors at the end of the others were locked

olted in the inside, with all their bars
ains so matted over with the network
e hundred spiders, that they had
tly not been moved for many months
t—then they gave up the search as
; and making their way back to the
with far more ease than they had
n the first instance, after a few apo-
to Master Selby, and an assurance
house should be no further troubled,
nsides departed. Then, after a little
Chaloner, resisting all Mark's efforts
in him, took his leave also, convinced
y as the rest, that his kinsman did
know nothing of the young cavalier,
at his fears on his behalf had all
verstrained and needless.

hin two hours, the same cell which
een so strictly searched, and found
lid and neglected, was neatly swept
rnished—the board was spread with
damask cloth, two bright wax lights
urning in tall candlesticks of silver,

a cheerful fire of wood was crackling
the brazier, and by the board sat Wyv
with his long hair all curled and arrang
carefully, and his rich dress in accura
order, sipping a glass of rich and fragra
Bordeaux wine, and reading, so to decei
the time, a huge romance of Calprenede
Scudery, while on the table at his elb
stood several plates and trenchers, with t
remains of a fat roasted capon, and t
long flask from which he ever and an
replenished his Venetian beaker—so lit
had the search availed to find the r
secrets of that old rambling manor.

CHAPTER XII.

For many days after the second march of the Ironsides, the family at Woolverton pursued, as it would seem, untroubled, the wonted round of their calm, quiet, daily avocations. No visiter disturbed the even tenour of their way; no stranger came within their gates. The good old man, whose age, and the well-known seclusion of his habits, should have exempted him, in the opinion even of his few puritan neighbours, from any such suspicion as would have justified a search, returned, apparently scarce conscious of their violent interruption, to his

old bookworm customs ; and read, and pondered, and dreamed days away ; and wrote huge volumes on abstruse and crabbed points of classical lore—volumes, which it would glad the heart of many a Regius professor now to discover, but which were never destined to see the light of any broader sun, than that which stole in through the shadowed casements of their, perhaps, too unambitious author's study.

Never, except at meal-times, or when some message of slight moment summoned a servant to his library, was he seen even by his own household; seeing that once or twice, when the clear radiance of some brighter morning than was common at that season, invited her forth to inhale the fresh breezy air of autumn, Alice persuaded him to don his sad-coloured riding-cloak and broad-leafed beaver, and lend her the support (mere nominal support indeed, and worse than useless, had any need occurred to make it requisite) of his frail arm. Then, for an hour or two at

he might have been seen loitering
side of his fair daughter beneath the
f his old elm-trees, or sitting on a
f stone, under the southern wall, to
himself with the faint beams of the
ber sun; while she, not far aloof,
in her parterres some bright late-
ng survivor of the summer, and strip-
ay its withered leaves, or fitted it by
at-handed preparations to meet the
winter.

imes too, though less often than be-
r perilous adventure in the park, she
er rounds among the village poor,
ing comforts, and awakening that
ratitude which ever greets calm and
tatious charity, through every cot-
ow poor and sad soever it might be,
ich she crossed the threshold—but
stead of the old superannuated ser-
who had been used to follow her steps
had done her mother's, many a year

before, on all her merciful errands, the trea-
sures of her laboratory were carried by an
athletic broad-shouldered young fellow
whose broadsword girded on his thigh, with
the small buckler swinging from his left
shoulder, would have proved a far more effi-
cient guard against marauders, than the oak
staff and feeble hand of poor old Jeremy.

Two or three times indeed, she took wing
as it were for a longer flight; and then the
country people looked on with an admiring
eye, a smile on every lip, and a blessing on
every tongue, as she swept through the soft
green lanes, on her dapple-gray palfrey, with
two grooms galloping behind her, and a whole
host of dogs. Talbot the mighty blood-
hound, Cynthia the soft silky setter, and
Romp and Rupert, thorough bred spaniels
both, and half-a-dozen others, sporting about
her pony's feet, as she rode forth to visit, at
rare intervals, the ladies of some neighbour-
ing family, the Foleys or the Fairfaxes, which

ugh strict presbyterians, had ever
friends of her lost mother, while
et alive.

ese were but exceptions; for it was
om, comparatively speaking, that
at all the precincts of the park;
within these, it began to be noticed
l servants, licensed gossips of the
, that she was less often visible
ore ; and that a far greater portion
ne was passed in the seclusion of
's study—strange choice for a young
!—for, heretofore, she had been
y, and even mirthful; but now it
fail to be observed that she was
anged, that her young lip was sel-
ted by smiles ; that a subdued and
expression pervaded her bright eyes,
y lineaments—an expression, not
at all, nor of thought altogether,
eep, pensive feeling.

ght be of hope tremulous and de-
it might be of that half-real, half-

ideal melancholy, which is not at all unusual to spirits of an imaginative and poetic temperament—or it might be, perhaps, the dawning of deeper thoughts, and warmer passions, that cast like coming events their dim prescient shadow over the tablets of her virgin mind, reflected thence on eye, and brow, and lip, and every speaking feature.

Much of her time was, indeed, passed now within the library—so far at least as the domestics had the means of knowing; but she and her old father alone knew where and how it was in truth consumed. For his years, and disinclination to taking any active exercise, had speedily induced Mark Selby to delegate to his sweet daughter the task of daily visiting their concealed guest, nor did he in truth again seek the crypt after the Ironsides had searched it. From that time forth, then, it became the task of Alice to see him each succeeding day, ministering to his wants, soothing his sorrows, cherishing his high

hopes of brighter fortune in the future, and forming, as it were, the sole connecting link between the bright external world, and the dull prison-house of the proscribed and hapless cavalier.

For several days, at first, it needed a strong effort, ere she could task herself to the performance of a duty, which, if she did not feel it altogether irksome, to say the least, was both embarrassing and painful; but gradually, as the restraint of a recent and irregular acquaintance faded away and was forgotten—and this occurred the sooner, that on no subsequent occasion did Marmaduke discover any of that affected and half-flippant gallantry, which had almost offended her in their first interview—and had learned to look upon it as a thing of course, she began slowly, and, as it were, half-reluctantly to take a lively interest in her imprisoned guest, looking forward to the hour when she must seek his cell with a sort of excitement, and regarding

the young man himself—as women ever regard any thing, whether it be the tame bird, or pet spaniel, or beloved infant, to the safety of which their care is essential—with an uncertain half-affectionate solicitude; which, while she could not altogether affect even in the depths of her own secret heart to misunderstand or deny it, she could neither discard from her bosom, nor confess to her inquiring conscience.

It became, moreover, so very soon unquestionably evident that Wyvil looked on those brief hours, stolen, as it were, from solitude, as constituting his whole day, all the rest being one dull dreary blank; and so respectful and considerate was the tone of his admiration, so delicately gentle his attention, so proudly humble the earnestness with which he supplicated her to bestow upon him, in mere charity, as many of her leisure moments as she could spare from more pleasurable occupations, that it was not in woman's nature but to feel gratified and

y evidences of his esteem and
so natural and unforced in their
nt.

ould not have been, in fact, de-
l it been the aim of any social
lli to frame wily schemes for
ose—any more dangerous artifice
the affections of a young, ardent,
ntic girl, than this entire abandon-
er whole time, her thoughts, her
ne discretion, as it were, of a brave,
aptivating gallant; and that too,
umstances beyond all others cal-
work on the imagination, to rouse
nt sensibilities, and through the
fluences of pity and protection to
heart of woman.

d, perhaps, at first sight, seem a
al remark, and one susceptible of
ation, to say that all men, and yet
vomen, are readier to attach them-
hose whom they have aided, than

to persons who have claims upon their
or gratitude from benefits conferred
onerous obligations—but we are certain
the more fully this shall be considered
more it will be found that it is true
natural. Why this should be, it is no
us to investigate at present; but throug
the whole range of human nature, the
strange contradiction, as it seems, wil
found prevalent. The children of her a
and sorrow are dearer—dearer a thous
fold to the young nursing wife, than
mother who brought her forth in suffe
and watched her infancy with tearful e
ness of hope, and cherished her fair y
with tender and solicitous affection. In
perchance, may lie the germ of all
matter—from this instinctive natural d
tion of women to those who are depen
and whom they love, as it would s
the more from the very helplessness of
dependance, perchance may spring that

in all our race to love, we will not say
enefactors less, but those whom they
ed more.

his, however, as it may, the fact will
d to be as we have stated it; and for
l who gives her whole heart up to
ose claims to her regard are based
titude for services performed, nine
heir love to men, whom they have
aligned and so defended—whom they
ccoured in distress, or, what is the
ing, whom they imagine they have
ed!—And so at last did it fall out
lice Selby—predisposed, from the
e had already taken in his fortunes,
e very perils she had incurred, and
e uncertainty of his final destinies, to
interest in the young cavalier whom
saved from death—when she found
erward intrusted wholly to her care,
ng on her discretion for his life, on
ntive ministering for his subsistence
day, on her society for his sole inter-

course with the fair world—that interest w
naturally increased tenfold! And then
eloquence, his bravery, his talents—his gr
tude expressed in words of living fire—
noble person and high intellectual feature
all the advantages, which nature gave h
and sedulous accomplishment had carr
forward to their utmost limit—all th
things, cast as it were before her feet, w
nessed by her alone, called forth as it
peared for her sole use, profusely lavis
for her pleasure, had, as they needs m
have, their due and full effect.

It must not be supposed, however, t
Alice was won easily, or that she was ind
won at all; for not a word of love had e
passed between the pair, nor is it in the le
probable that so much as a thought of it l
as yet crossed her innocent mind; since
may be deemed certain that if any thing
the kind had ever suggested itself, her j
lous bashfulness would have at once ta
the alarm, and by rendering her aware

her danger, would simultaneously have rendered that danger quite innoxious. It is true that she thought Wyvil, as indeed he was, the most accomplished and high-toned gentleman she had ever yet encountered; she admitted to herself that he was the most agreeable, that his conversation, enriched as it was with anecdote, sparkling with brilliant humour, pervaded by a rich vein of feeling, strong and poetical, and tinged not slightly with romance, was the most captivating to the senses of any to which she had ever listened.

Then, too, his feelings were conveyed to her ear through the medium of perhaps the most perfect voice that ever breathed its fascination into a woman's soul—it was rich, deep, well-timed, yet soft as summer music, and it had too that peculiar quality of music which caused its every tone to haunt the hearer's brain, like a remembered tune heard suddenly after long years of absence—and there is certainly no fascination so vast as

that imbodied in a sweet, powerful, cultivated voice. She saw that he was handsome, likewise—but that, as it was the case with women of that class and station in the world, whose love is in the least worth having, had scarce availed him any thing with Alice, unless he had been gifted eminently, as in good truth he was, with all the nobler treasures of intellectual manhood—and from all these things it resulted, by a most natural consequence, that, although she had never yet thought of the man at all, except as feeling that in some degree his presence and society, which in the beginning she had so much dreaded, had even now become a pleasure, and pitying his endangered fortunes; the beautiful young woman was half in love already, and quite prepared to wake at once into the consciousness of passion, when any casual-word, or trifling accident should break her day dream of security.

So stood affairs at Woolverton, when, full a fortnight after the visit of the Ironsides,

till gleamy afternoon, when all the was dressed out in its brightest guise of , and every thing on earth, as in heaven, eaceful and at rest, sweet Marian rd was seen traversing the park, her nd delicate figure shrouded in a loose f dark blue woollen, and her soft hair, covered by a deep gipsy-hat of nade straw; and asking at the gate tress Alice, was instantly admitted to esence, and that without creating any r or surmise, for her blind, aged ther, and the poor idiot, were special tes of the young lady, and rarely did s a second day without either seeing r hearing of their welfare.

ell, Marian?" exclaimed Alice, "how our mother, and how poor helpless ? I should have been down one day ek to visit you, but that I have been aged at home, that I have really lacked "

ey are as well, my dear young lady,

as they can ever be this side the grave," plied the fair young widow; " but it is on their account that I have come to s you; I know, too, that you have been cl engaged at home,—and I believe I kn *how* likewise,—or if I do not know, I at le have a shrewd guess of it—nay, lady, swer me not, I pray you; but listen to errand, for I have much to tell you, and must act as you deem best, when you h heard all I have got to say. The ped Bartram, of whom you have bought, I thi wares at sundry times, is at the Stag's H since last night, and on his part I come you."

" To me, from Master Bartram? wherefore, wherefore, my good Maria asked Alice, blushing deeply as she spo and endeavouring to avoid, she scarce kn why, the quiet melancholy eye of her you visiter.

" Oh! you may trust me, dearest la surely you cannot doubt that you may t

me! for have not I too suffered in the same cause, and does not that one bond of suffering link me more closely to my fellows in that sorrow, than any ties that earth has now to hold me? I would give every thing but life, myself, to buy his safety for this young gallant gentleman—and life itself, how joyfully! were there not those yet living to whom that life is needful. But think not that I wish to pry into your secret, if you have one; I only speak to let you see my mind, and understand my motives. And now, this is mine errand. Bartram is at the Stag's Head now, or will be there anon, and bid me say to you, he has obeyed your father's bidding, and all is well, and well-nigh ready. But he must see you, lady, either at our poor house, or in the little park beyond the river, after it is quite dark this very evening—he dare not come up to the Hall upon this business."

"Oh! now I understand you," answered Alice; "I understand you quite well; but

tell me, Marian, has Bartram explained nothing to you of all this?"

"Not a word, Mistress Alice; though he said he did not doubt I should understand, and that very likely you would trust me with the whole."

"But I will not," said Alice; "I will *not*, Marian." Then seeing instantly that an expression, not of vexation or offended pride, but of regret and disappointment was written legibly on the young widow's speaking features, she added, with a smile, "not that I have the least doubt of your faith and truth, or the least fear of your prudence, but that such confidences are very dangerous to those who are intrusted; and I would not involve, without the plea of strong necessity, another in the risk which I run myself willingly. If need be, however, Marian, be quite sure I *will* trust you. But now, how to arrange this meeting will be, I fear me, not so easy. Who knows of Bartram's presence hereabout?"

Jo one at all," Marian replied, "except
f, so far. For he tapped at my case-
long past midnight, and bade me let
ı quite silently; and I did so at once,
guessed partly what he was about; and
he had charged me with this mes-
ıe sat beside the kitchen fire till it was
daylight, and then letting himself out
back-door locked it after him, and
he key into my window. He has gone
well believe, to Farmer Sherlock's;
will be back before nightfall, and I
eft the lattice open in the two-story
r to the rear, that he may climb the
all by the elm-trees, and thence
into the house unseen. There I will
im your answer, and he will meet
here you will."

the park, then," said Alice, "under
rge oak-tree, beyond the third foot-
; there will I wait for him from seven
clock."

know not," answered Marian, "I do

not think the park so over safe; they say stone walls have ears; and, on my word, I think green leaves have ears and eyes too nowadays. For as I came across the little park, just by the very tree you mention, there is, if you forget not, a small steep hollow place, an old sand-pit or quarry, quite overgrown with weeds and bushes; just as I passed the brink of it, I heard a kind of scraping sound, as if some person were dragging himself on his breast along the ground, and then a rustle as if of branches parted by a strong careful hand—so I looked round quite naturally, not as if I had heard any thing, and made believe to call a little dog; but I saw quite distinctly two full dark eyes gleaming out from among the tangled thorns and briers.

"I took no notice then, however; for I perceived at once that I could not discover any more of the features, but passed on a few paces further, and then turned round again, and cheruped for the dog, though I had no

dog with me; that time I got rather a fairer view, and saw the whole of the man's face—for a man it was—although he did not think I saw him! As grim and truculent a countenance as ever I beheld, with a close crop of foxy hair, and the most evil aspect in the eye, you can imagine. I am sure, too, that I have seen the face before, though where or when I cannot bring to mind. It seems to me, though, that it was not long since; and I cannot but think it was connected with some painful scene or other. I have been tasking myself ever since to try and recollect, but I cannot do so, were it to save my life. Of this, however, I am assured, that he lay there in wait for somebody or other. I think the better way would be, dear Mistress Alice, that I should leave you now, and come back somewhat suddenly when it is growing dark; then you may take a servant or two armed with you, and they can wait in the kitchen while I lead you up

stairs, as if to see the children, or Martin, who, to say truth, is somewhat ailing."

"I see," said Alice, after a moment's thought, "I see; and think as you do. This is unpleasant news, however, concerning this spy in the park, if spy he be—but might he not have been a poacher, lying in wait for the deer, think you, Marian?"

"I think not, lady," she replied; "there was, I know not what, that made me think of homicide or treason in his eye; he had not the dare-devil look of a deer-stealer. It was a hypocritical, bad, downcast visage, as ever man wore on his shoulders!"

"Well, 'tis too late to look to this to day: to-morrow he shall be seen after. In the mean time do as you have suggested, Marian; come for me about six o'clock, and Charles and Launcelot shall go with us. You will return by the road, will you not?"

"That would be unwise, lady, and if he be a spy, might lead him to suspect some-

and so to change his ground. Besides,
uite clear that I have nothing to
end; he had me in his power before,
thought fit to harm me. No, I will
k as I came; and see, I brought my
basket for an excuse, and I will get it
ith simples by Dame Trueman, and
way, my errand being done."

stay! stay a moment!" Alice cried,
ll me what ails Martin!"

in good sooth not much; but he is
greatly, since that bad officer en-
him so rudely, and since the soldiers
is mastiff; and he sleeps not so much
day-time, nor is so quiet—but has
a rambler of late, which he never
ore; wandering off into the wood-
whole days; starting so soon as the
s, and sometimes not returning until
n is up; and though he brings back
and late field-flowers, and sometimes
ries and hips and haws, I think it is
r these he roams abroad; for I do

fancy that the expression of his face is changed too, and that not for the better! He wears a cunning and suspicious glance at times; and seems for ever as he were seeking to track some one to a hiding-place: but yet it may be nothing but my fancy. We tried at first, when he took up this habit to confine him; but then he had such awful fits and paroxysms, that we were forced to let him go his own way, trusting his welfare unto Him 'who tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb.' I hope, however, that I am in the wrong about his change of temper. I hope it is my fancy!"

"Mere fancy, Marian! be sure of it," answered Alice, rising. "And now farewell, and recollect to call for me;" and, as she spoke, she led her out to the stair-head where the servants might hear what she said, and shaking her warmly by the hand, "Well, good-by!" she continued, "pray get those things you want from Trueman as you go, and don't forget to come for me, should

n have another seizure,—I will go with
; a moment's notice." And then they
, Alice to seek her father's study and
request his counsel, and Marian to
home, with fearless port but trem-
heart, along the path which she be-
waylaid by lurking ruffians.

END OF VOL. 1.

C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

ARMADUKE WYVIL;

OR,

THE MAID'S REVENGE.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

BY HENRY WM. HERBERT, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF "OLIVER CROMWELL," &c.

"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MARMADUKE WYVIL.

CHAPTER I.

It was not altogether without some trepidation, if not positive alarm, that Marian Rainsford hurried homeward; for, in spite of her strong natural sense, and her conviction that no evil was intended toward herself by the man she had seen in the park, it was still a position quite sufficiently alarming to be at the mercy of an unknown individual, whose motives, to judge from his demeanour,

could scarcely be compatible with uprightness or honour. That portion of the park, too, was very solitary; and, indeed, was but rarely visited, except by the forester on his appointed rounds, as had been proved by the boldness of the late attack on Alice Selby—a boldness well nigh justified by that great gilder of all human actions—ultimate success.

The youthful widow was, however, of a temperament which, naturally calm, and self-restrained, had been yet farther schooled by hard and sad experience; she had thought much on many subjects, and rarely indeed acted on impulse; the same cool foresight, therefore, which had made her determine to return homeward by the same path which she had taken in going out, the better to deceive the lurking spy—who, if he were indeed a spy, must be presumed acquainted with her person, and her dwelling-place—taught her, that to avoid the danger, she must avoid showing fear of it; so with a quiet, easy air, and with a step slower if any thing than common, though it must be admitted that her

heart throbbed painfully, and that her ear marked every trivial sound, she neared the brink of the old sandpit.

Nothing occurred, however, to disturb her self-possession, nor did she see or hear aught which could be held to betoken the presence of a living being; if it were not a thin blue wreath of vapour, which curled up lazily out of the tangled brushwood that fringed the verge and all the steep sides of the little quarry, and which, when she had seen it from a distance, her eye unpractised to such accidents—as a painter might have termed the effect—had confounded with the evening mists already floating up all gray and ghostly around the damp and marshy woodlands. As she passed by, however, she instantly detected its true character, and yet she misinterpreted its meaning; for as she could not catch—although she listened with her every sense on the alert—the slightest sound of conversation, she came to the conclusion that those who had lighted the fire for their own purposes had ere now left the spot; the rather

that a robin, perched in full sight upon a leafless bough, was warbling his simple tune within ten paces of the place whence the blue smoke was rising into the evening air, and that two large and lazy hares were pasturing quite fearlessly beside the pathway. This error, for error it was, had well nigh led her into very serious peril, for she was on the point of going forward to examine the ground, when suddenly, she scarce knew why, a sense of terror fell upon her, and she moved onward at her wonted pace, till she had passed the nearest clump of trees, and then she fairly took to her heels, and never ceased from running until she reached home, breathless but uninjured.

Lucky it was, indeed, for her that she did not leave the beaten track—lucky that she did not even pause—for the song of the bird, and the lazy tameness of the hares, indicated not that there were no human beings near at hand, for such was not the case, but only that they had made no movement recently, it being characteristic of such animals to en-

tertain no fears, even of the great tyrant, man, so long as he sits or stands motionless and silent. Lucky it was indeed—if that may be called lucky which was the result of forethought more than of any accident or chance—since at that very moment, sheltered from view by the precipitous banks of sandy gravel and the thick bushes overhanging them, three strong and ruffian-looking men were seated round the fire, which sent up the thin smoke that had caught Marian's notice.

It was a singular and exceedingly well chosen spot for an ambuscade or post of espial, for you might pass within ten feet of its brink without imagining that there was any thing more than a small shallow basin full of brushwood, while in reality it was a deep and abrupt pit, with sheer-cut sides of nearly twenty feet, whence at some distant period the sandstone had been quarried for purposes of rural architecture. It was indeed quite small, not above fifteen yards in length by half that width, and so luxuriantly had the

broom and evergreen furze shot forth from the brink of its banks, that they almost entirely overcanopied it. The ground in this quarter of the park was broken into abrupt rounded hillocks, and this pit had been sunk in one of these, close to the crest of the knoll, so that when it had attained its utmost depth an irregular and narrow cart-track had been cut through the slope into the nearest hollow; this track, however, having been long disused, and half choked by the earth and stones which had rolled from above, and overrun completely with every species of tangled underwood, was quite forgotten, and would, doubtless, have been quite obliterated too, but that a little thread of running water, the offspring of a tiny well-head, which had been opened as the stony strata were cut through, found its way down the narrow gorge to join the neighbouring rivulet.

So insignificant, indeed, was the whole surface occupied, and so completely was it sheltered, that there were not perhaps five people in the county who knew of its exist-

ence, although it lay, as has been stated, within ten paces of a regular footpath; some two or three of the old servants, had they been questioned, would probably have recollected that they had seen or heard of it, and the gamekeeper knew the gulley well, for it was a favourite haunt of woodcocks, when all the marshy woods were frozen hard, though it is scarcely probable that he had ever followed the streamlet upward to its source. No fitter clue could, therefore, have been chosen by any person whose object it might be to join seclusion, with the ability of keeping watch over the dwellers of the hall, since its steep banks concealed it from all observation, and sheltered it from every wind of heaven, while its pure spring afforded an unfailing antidote to thirst, and heavy must have been the storm which should beat down upon its inmates, between the tangled branches of the thicket overhead.

In this sequestered nook, around a fire, which evidently was but just kindled, of dried leaves, and such broken branches as would

give forth but little smoke, three men were seated, silently superintending the preparation of their evening meal, for which there lay ample provision on the dry mossy green sward, in the shape of a hare already stripped of his furry coat and trussed for cooking, and a brace of superb cock pheasants, when they were interrupted by the crackling sound of a dry branch; several of which they had disposed for that very purpose across the path, so that it would have been no easy matter for any one to have avoided treading on them, even had he been desirous of so doing. As no such thought had entertained Marian's mind, she trod on one or two quite unsuspiciously, and the sharp crackle, with which they yielded to her light, springy tread, reached ears, as we have seen, keenly awake to every passing token.

One of the party rose immediately, making a sign of caution to the others, and scaling the bank easily by the aid of steps cut in its harder strata, and stakes set firmly in the looser portions, brought his eye just above the

d speedily discovering who was
by, and seeing that she walked
quite fearlessly, descended again
ades, and resumed his seat, saying
to their inquiring glances,
t was but the young wench of the
assed an hour ago or better, when
he watch."
e but right," answered one of the
h an appalling oath, "to strip off
f she has nothing more about her,
er a walk home *in cuerpo*, as the
as it, this fine fresh afternoon."
l that would not do at all, of God's
at all," returned the first speaker,
logged, puritanical looking youth,
a strong new doublet of buff lea-
as was worn by the Ironsides when
nd a slouched grey felt hat. "I do
at you would ruin the best scheme
wit hatched, by your rash rake-
auding. I almost do regret I have
with you; I do, as my soul hopes
ation."

"As your soul hopes to see hell-fire," replied the other man, a tall, rawboned, and tawdily dressed soldier, with huge mustaches, and a peaked beard upon his chin; the very caricature in fact of a debauched and roistering cavalier, as was the other of a fanatical independent; "to see hell-fire, you should say, rather—for an the courses you run here, lead not that way, the road is very different I trow from what the preachers tell us. But if you are so sorry you have joined with us, what keeps you here? I say, what keeps you here with us? Too much of honour is it for a d—d scurvy roundhead to be admitted to go shares with gentlemen who have fought for the king. Why do you consort with us, Master Despard? I trow we never sought your company."

"Because he cannot help it," said the third man, who had not spoken before; "because he cannot help it. Beverly, why do you ask such silly questions? seeing, you know, as well as he does, that since he was broken

sed the Ironsides, he has no help
o take toll as we do."
I should rather ask," retorted
why we, two cavaliers of honour,
canting psalm-singer to hang upon
and carry it so high as if he were
"

can tell you," said Despard, for it
er than the tyrannical and brutal
o had been cashiered and dis-
Henry Chaloner's instance; "that
you very shortly, because five
t five, of mine, would send you to
s at Low Barnsley Moor; first, as
malignants; second, as common
chers; and third, as the assaulters
istress Alice Selby; five words of
d do this piece of very notable
I do not know 'fore heaven, why
ak them."
vill I make sure that you don't," re-
ller ruffian, starting to his feet, and
hand where the hilt of his sword
e been, but where there only swung

an empty scabbard. Despard, however, did not quit his seat, nor indeed moved at all, though his dark, jealous eye watched every movement of his man with eager scrutiny; but when he saw him clutch the useless scabbard, he uttered a low sneering laugh.

"Pity," he said, "'tis pity, thou did'st throw away a weapon thou seemest so prompt to handle, and all in empty terror for an unloaded pistol, when hadst thou but possessed half a man's courage, thou mightest have pinked that straight-laced idiot, Chaloner, and clodded the knave farmer into the deepest hole of the river, and then turned the girl to thine own uses afterwards. Tush man, you cavaliers and kingsmen, for all your braggart ruffling, are fit but to rob hen-roosts, and frighten country cullions. Tush! I say, tush! Hugh Beverly, we are not here to wrangle or to fight, but to be well revenged upon our enemies, and to amend our fortunes, as thou knowest."

"Curse Chaloner, and you too!" answered the other, gruffly; resuming his seat, however, as he spoke—"for had *he* not thrust

o that, which concerned him no-
ıad won gold enough to carry us
'rance long since—and then must
in with your confounded schemes
Hung! by the Lord! if we were
ll, it should be for what we are
ow—to yield up an old kingsman,
rade too, to the filthy roundhead
But if we do 'scape hanging for't,
ıot 'scape the stings of our con-
For my part, I do not like it

collect," put in the other cavalier
ct, Beverly, how he set you in the
d swore that you should taste of
do."
f he did, Paul, I cannot say but I
t," the tall man interrupted him—
ue upon the bilboes! If Captain
uld see us, as we are, he would
ly share his last crown with us;
o save his own life ten times over,
betray our hiding-place, or yield
hangman."

"Well, Beverly," returned the other, "if you think thus of it, you were best budge, and seek your fortune elsewhere. Master Despard and I will do the job without you. But as it must be done, whether you will or no, it seems to me you were best share the deed, and go thirds in the guerdon; think, man, a hundred crowns to each of us, and a free pardon!"

"Damn the crowns!" Beverly replied. "I would not do it for ten thousand, if I could only get myself quietly away to France."

"But that thou canst not, friend," said Despard, who thought it full time to strike in, now that his comrade's virtue was yielding fast to the temptation; "but that thou canst not do, were it to save thy soul from sure perdition. Here thou art, many a long mile from the sea, with all the roads patrolled on every side, and not a tester in thy pouch! Thou hast no choice but to join with us, or to perish. Besides, it may not go so hard with this malignant, Wyvil, after all. For, of a verity, I owe him no grudge;

and, for me, he might go safe where'er he listed, were it not for the price upon his head, and for the certainty of proving Chaloner guilty of treacherous connivance, and bringing down his cool, proud insolence of bearing to infamy and ruin, for all he lords it now so fairly! Come pluck up heart, man, thou must needs on with us."

"I fear you say true, and I must," Beverly answered; "but I would not—by all the fiends in hell! I would not, could I at all do otherwise! Pass me the bottle, Paul, pass me the bottle;" and grasping, with the words, a huge black leather flagon, half filled with spirits, he gulped down his qualms of conscience in a deep draught of the liquid fire; and, dropping it again, folded his arms upon his breast, and frowning, fixed his eyes doggedly on the ground, as one resolved to act against the dictates of his better reason. For a minute or two no farther words were interchanged, but Despard screwed his features into a hideously acute

grimace, and winked at the ruffian who had been called Paul, pointing, as he did so, with his thumb over his shoulder, to the lesser villain, Beverly; and then a grim smile kindled both their visages, as they exulted over the last-vanished glimpse of their companion's nobler nature.

After a little pause, however, Paul addressed the puritan in a subdued voice, not necessarily to attract attention from the other. "But are you so sure," he said, "after all, that Wyvil is concealed up here at the manor? I cannot see, for my part, how he can well be there, after such thorough searching; nor if he be, how you can know it."

"I tell you, man, he *must* be there; did we not chase him down to the very bridge in full sight of our party, and when we turned the corner, lo! he was vanished away? and was not his horse found close beside the river, where he had tied him in the woodland; and did not our first squadron

see this girl at the Fishhouse, who had departed thence when we came thither; and is not this good proof?"

"It may be good suspicion, but hardly proof, I think! It were the devil's own hash to be foiled in this manner, after we have been loitering hereabout so long."

"I tell you we will not be foiled; keep thou but sharp watch. For while I lay last night watching the forester under the old park wall, I heard that pedlar knave, that Bartram—I never miss a voice I have heard once before!—chattering with the quean, Marian, of the inn. I could not catch all that they said, but I am sure I heard the pedlar send her to fix some time and place where he might speak with Mistress Alice; doubtless to scheme this Marmaduke's escape; and I doubt not it was to that end she visited the Hall. As soon as it grows dark, we will part company: you, Paul, shall watch the lane and the park-gates; Beverly, here, shall hang about the Fishhouse; while I will take my old post by the wall."

"But are you certain," Paul again
quired, "that when we have found out
time, we shall be able to entrap him?
you assured you have discovered all
outlets of that same hiding-place of w
the soldiers told you?"

"I tell you yes, fool, yes!" returned
other; "there be but two, and I have fo
them both; one in a drain that opens
beneath the park wall, eastward of the g
into the old green lane; the other ha
mouth in the stream's bank, not bigger n
than a fox-earth; I had not found it, h
not well known from the troopers the
direction of each passage."

"But after all is done," said Beverly,
had been listening all the time, althe
they knew it not; "we shall be in the
as much as ever. We cannot possibly
by which of the two gates they mean t
him out, and we are not sufficiently str
handed to beset both."

"Oh! for that I have taken thou
said Despard; "we will force them to

we choose. That in the river-bank
e the easier of the two whereat to
im, and I will so arrange it, that there
e a troop of horse posted before the
ce of the drain that night. I have
ld friends yet among the soldiers, and
t the sending a false letter."

y, that will do—that will do, bravely,
e can seize him meanwhile, and carry
t once to head-quarters," cried Paul,
gly, rubbing his hands as he spoke.
come," he added, in a moment after-
; "come, let us roast the hare, and get
ppers. The fire has burned bright,
will cook him quickly. We must put
e embers too, before the keeper takes
nd, and it is getting dark already. It
wonder the wench saw not the smoke
passed by. Art sure she did not,
rd?"

ust me for that, she never lifted once
elids from the ground," the puritan
; "else had I twisted her head round,

before she could have called for succour, had there been any near."

And then, without more words, they all three set to work in earnest about the cookery of the game; and in less than half an hour —just as the night was closing in, and objects were but indistinctly visible at a few paces' distance—they had not only prepared, but discussed their supper, flung a few handfuls of sand upon the embers, and, gathering up their weapons, gone off in different directions into the growing darkness.

CHAPTER II.

MEANTIME, all unsuspicious of any plots against her, Alice awaited the return of her humble friend; and scarcely was it dark, before, according to their preconcerted scheme, Marian came up quite breathless from the lodges, and sent a message in, praying that Mistress Alice would, of her kindness, walk down to the Stag's Head, since Martin had been taken, as they feared, death-sick. Old Mark looked up from his book quickly, as the word was delivered; for she was sitting with him at the time, engaged about some graceful feminine handiwork, and began say-

ing something about the lateness of the hour, and the darkness; but he perceived, as he looked up, a meaning in his daughter's eye, which checked him as he did so, and he made no further opposition, when she said, calmly,

"Oh, father, I must go. I shall not be away above an hour or so at the utmost. I will take Launcelot and Charles, with weapons and a lantern, so there cannot be any danger."

"As you will, Alice," the old man replied; "but I must say I think it foolish, seeing that to go in the morning would, probably, do every whit as well. The men, however, must carry firearms, if you will go. See to it, Peter," he continued; "see that they carry pistolets beside their broadswords." Then, as the servant left the room to execute his bidding—"What is there in the wind now, Alice?" he said, anxiously; "for I am certain there is something. I can read that in your eye and heightened colour."

"Oh, read your Æschylus, dear father,"

smiling, as if to reassure him, "in-
wasting your acumen upon my silly
You shall know all when I return,
ood news, I fancy," and she stooped
as she spoke, and parted the long
air from his broad brow, and kissed
erly before she left the room.
ng occurred of any moment on their
cept that Marian told her how Mar-
in truth, come home from wander-
e park far more distempered than
een since the outrage; that he had
furiously about the soldier, that he
fied them all, and had then fallen
worst fit she had ever witnessed.
had not arrived when she left home,
feared he would be there before
And so, indeed, he was; for, when
hed the Stag's Head, after desiring
nen to make themselves comfortable
tchen hearth, over a pot of spiced
h stood simmering in the chimney
ll mantled over with a rich creamy

froth; and sending off the girls, on the pretext of putting the blind woman quietly to bed, Marian lit a handlamp, and led the fair young lady by the same winding staircase into the same neat chamber wherein Chaloner had breakfasted on the eventful morning which sealed his earthly fate. Here she set down the light upon the table, and opening a small door into an inner chamber, looking to the back of the house, and quite overshadowed by the tall elm-trees of the park, which grew within ten or twelve feet of the latticed window. "Bartram," she said, in a low whisper, "are you there, Master Bartram?"

"Ay," was the answer, in a yet lower tone; "ay, but be very cautious. I fear we may be watched. Is Mistress Alice with you? I need not ask though, for I hear her gentle tread. Come in then—come in both of you—now quickly. Leave the light there—oh, leave the light!—it would betray us outright; and hark you, Marian, reach me

that old steel crossbow and the bolts that hang above the chimney. It is as well to be prepared for the worst always."

Alice immediately entered, and went up to the pedlar, whose sturdy and athletic form she could discern indistinctly near the window, saying, in a sweet guarded tone, "Well, Master Bartram, I have come to hear what you can have to say to me; something of greater moment than the last modes, or the price of French taffeta, I hope."

"Yes, indeed; yes, indeed, lady," he replied; "but, I beseech you, come and sit here by me, that I may speak quite low to you. I do not like the shadow of those trees. A man might lie upon the coping of the wall, within six feet of us, and we no thought the wiser."

"Then why not shut the casement? or, better yet, go to the other chamber?" said Alice, doing, however, quietly as he directed her.

"Because," said Bartram, still gazing intently out into the darkness, "this is the

only safe room in the house. In all the rest, the servants would overhear us; and, as for the casement, four of the panes are broken—the worse luck on it. It slipped from my hand as I entered, and fell back against the tenter-hook in the house-side. So, if I were to shut it, it would but hinder us from seeing what's afoot without doors, while it would be no safeguard in the least, to us within.

"Ay, that's it, Marian," he continued, as he received the crossbow from her hand, and instantly applied himself to bend it, and fit the granel, or steel-headed bolt, to the stiff cat-gut string. "Now keep you watch there in the parlour; but do not shut the door, lest Mistress Alice be afraid, nor move the lamp at all—it is well placed now, since it casts no glimmer hitherward. Now, lady, listen—listen with all your ears—that you may perfectly remember, and *that*, if possible, without obliging me to answer any question. We have but little time to talk; and if I be not more mistaken than I am very

aw the shadow of a man dogging
park; and, if it were so, he was
o far off as he should have been,
imbed in here at this window."
ot fear," answered Alice, "that I
ly comprehend, and perfectly re-
what you tell me. Go on at once,
u, for the sooner I reach home, the
ll be for all of us."
then," he said, still speaking very
pausing every now and then to
a moment, and keeping his eyes
n the summit of the park wall,
s nearly on the level of the window
then, all is prepared for the young
escape, a sharp, fast-sailing lugger
f the Welsh coast, relays of horses
dy posted in spots where none will
ooking for them; I will accompany
e seashore myself, and see him safe
Ha! what was that? did you not
ınd?"
s a bird," Alice replied; "only the
little bird; and hark! that is the

flutter of his wings, as he takes flight. Go on, good Bartram."

But he did not go on, but sat there with his head bent forward, his rapid roving eye glancing continually over every object, and his ear drinking every sound, however small or trivial. But there arose no further noise; although he listened for ten minutes at the least, moving not, nor speaking—then with a doubtful and dissatisfied shake of the head, "It was indeed a bird"—he said—"a missel thrush! awakened from its roost by sudden fear—that much is clear enough, to all who know the habits of the bird—but what should have compelled him to take wing so wildly, it would require a wiser head than mine to fathom."

"How can you think so deeply on such a trifle?" said Alice, wondering greatly at the pedlar's manner—"what can it signify what roused him? a fox perhaps passing among the shrubs below; or a night-owl it might be, or perhaps a snake—"

"As for trifles! lady," the pedlar replied

very gravely, "I trust in heaven, that you may never learn as I have, to take the closest note of all such seeming trifles—taught so to do by the hard bitter teacher of the best earthly wisdom—painful and sad experience. I have been hunted, day and night, by savage bloodhounds and men more savage yet, and have 'scaped only by my knowledge of such trifles. Lady, God has not given one small instinct, to one the smallest of his creatures, but has its clear and proper meaning—but speaks to him, who comprehends, with voice as plain and audible, and far more true than any human accents. There is not a bark or whine of the hill-fox, not a yell of the wild cat, a shriek of the night wandering owl—not a note of the meanest warbler, nay! not a croak of the garrulous frog, but I have learned to mark them, and draw deep warnings from them, each and all! But it was none of those things which you named that startled that poor throstle. A fox would not have roused the bird at all, for it roosts high, and knows, as well we do, that foxes

climb no trees—night owls prey ever in the open meadows, and strike their victims on the ground, never among thick woods, or even in high bushes; then as for snakes, the cold nights, this week past, have driven them all into their snug holes underground for winter-quarters. No, if that thrush did not wake up scared by a dream—for birds dream also, Mistress Alice, although I don't suppose you will believe me—it was a man that forced it to take wing, and yet I heard no footstep, nor any rustling of the branches."

"It was a dream, then, I dare say," said Alice, not a little surprised, and rather restless at his long discussion, "for, surely, had there been a man, we must have heard him; go on, I pray you, with our more urgent business."

"Well, as I said, then, all is ready; and I have picked a stout and bold companion to see us clear at starting. Now, lady, mark me well; the third night hence there will be no moon, none at all! and, as I think, the wea-

ther will be cloudy. We shall need all the hours of darkness; for if the day dawn on our road, we are but lost men all. At eight o'clock, then, to the moment, we must start. Now tell me clearly,—where are the mouths of the two outward passages. This you must speak out fearlessly, for we *must* know it, or we shall never meet; but wander, it may be, all the night long in the park at cross purposes."

"One opens in the lane, sixty-four paces due east from the lodge, a large arched drain comes out, through the park wall, just opposite a tall old ash tree; you cannot miss the spot. The other—my father told me this, that I might tell it to a trusty friend, in case of urgent need—communicates with a low natural cave, not larger much than a fox-earth or rabbit burrow; the mouth is in the steep red gravelly bank of the rivulet, about an arrow shot above the first of the three bridges; it is within a foot or less of the water's brink, and in high floods is sometimes quite submerged; there is a clump of

very thick dark hollies on the bank's edge, and one of the same trees, a variegated one, about midway, the steep declivity exactly over it."

"Hush!" whispered the pedlar, "hush!" laying his hard hand on her arm, in the excitement of the moment, "heard you not that?" as a slight grating sound, like that which a person might make creeping along the top of a rough-hewn stone wall, became quite audible; and, as he spoke, he rose carefully to his feet, holding the cross-bow ready in his hand for instant service. The very next moment the noise was repeated, and was followed closely by a loud rustling of the branches of the elm, which could be indistinctly seen to shake against the dull horizon, though there was not a breath of air abroad to stir them. As quick as thought the crossbow rose to Bartram's shoulder, a hoarse clang broke the silence, and then the whizzing of the heavy missile! The boughs were more violently agitated yet, as if some heavy body were breaking its way through

them; and in a moment the marked and peculiar sound of a soft, heavy mass falling upon the ground succeeded, with something that resembled a faint groan.

"Good God!" cried Alice, clasping her hands in all the agony of mortal terror, Good God! you have killed some one—oh! how could you be so rash, so unthinking?"

"I hope I have," Bartram replied, speaking in a louder voice than he had ventured to adopt before, and not without some real dignity; "I hope I have slain some one, for that one must have been either a night-robber or a spy, and which he was soever, death is his fitting meed. But I believe I have not; for I shot quite at random, and I fancy the bolt broke his arm; at least he was alive as he dropped through the branches, and seemed to catch at them as if to break his fall."

"He may be wounded, then," Alice exclaimed.—"Oh, Heavens!—wounded, and bleeding his life blood away upon the cold damp ground, without a helping hand to soothe his tortures. Let me call Charles and

Launcelot, to go and search for him with torches!" and, as she spoke, she darted toward the door, but Bartram caught her firmly, yet respectfully, and held her fast by the arm.

"Unhand me, sir!" she said, with not a little indignation in her tones, though they were still instinctively suppressed,—"unhand me, for I will go forth!"

"Not for your life, dear lady—for all our lives, I say!" responded Bartram—"yours—Wyvil's—mine—but that is little worth, and ready at a moment's call;—and your good father's!" and, seeing that she was struck by his words, he released her and continued,—"Now hear me, Mistress Alice, but twenty words more, and then return straightway to the hall, taking your servants with you; as soon as you shall have departed, I will go look for the man I shot at—I will, by all that I hold sacred! Now this is all, that still is left to say—I understand the spots you have described distinctly. Of these, the first will be the best, if it be possible to use it;

, let him try that the first. But, as
on the road, something may well
make it perilous. Therefore, let
for this token; if he find not a glove
ıe drain, at some five yards from the
ıouth, directly in the centre of the
nel—for it *is* dry, I well remember—
go back at once, and he will find us
her. He must be at the drain mouth
fter seven, that he may have full
get back to the other entrance if he
the symbol. But, for no cause what-
him go forth until he hear me whistle
he knows my call I trow! Now, do
erstand distinctly? Let him be at
ı by seven, and, if he find the glove,
u there, until he hear the signal; if
k with the speed of light to the cave
iver."

yes! I understand distinctly," she
"but—"

no buts—no buts, dear lady," said
ar; "we have no time for buts. You
e whole plan now before you, and if

you manage rightly, then his escape is certain; if not, then on their heads be the blame, who mar it in the acting. Now, Marian, light her down the stairs. Take your men hastily, I do beseech you, Mistress Alice, and get you homeward with all speed; this is no place for such as you, at such an hour. God's blessing on your head, and be of a good heart, for all shall yet go well. And trust me, I will go forth instantly, and see what has befallen yonder—though I am well assured his life is safe, and his wounds, if he indeed be wounded, quite superficial. It is as well so, too, for he heard nothing of our conversation—nothing at least that could do good or evil."

He led her to the door as he said this, and while Marian conducted her down to the kitchen, and saw her set forth for the hall under the keeping of her sturdy yoemen, he lifted from the table, where they had lain during his interview with Alice, two brace of large long-barrelled pistolets, and a broad-bladed wood-knife; the latter of which he thrust

pelt at first, whereas he opened the
he others, and felt that the powder
dry and loose, and the flints firm
ore he consigned them to the girdle.
e, he mounted on the window-sill,
large flexible branch of the elm tree
is hands, and swung himself, with
agility than could be looked for in
his years and thickset frame, to the
e park wall; alighting on it firmly,
ncing himself a moment, before he
nd grasping the projecting coping
rong hold, lowered himself to arm's
d thence dropped safely to the earth
e park of Woolverton. There he
diligently and for a long time, if he
cover any trace of the man he had
but there was no one there, alive or
r was there any sign that any thing
from above, except that one small
beaten to the earth, and some of
oots battered and broken as if by
vy body.

CHAPTER III.

It was already very late, when Alice entered the park-gates, for the walk and her interview with Bartram had occupied much more time than they had imagined, and supper was ended; but so well had the whole scheme been arranged, that her unusual absence excited in this instance neither suspicion nor surprise. Desiring that some light refreshments, with wine and water, should be carried up into the library, she ran up thither instantly, thinking, it is true, very little about such matters, and eager only to disbosom herself to her father, as soon as possible, of her important tidings.

This was soon done; and so much pleasure did the old man exhibit at the intelligence, that, though she spoke not of it, his very evident joy seemed selfish and unkind to Alice; who, though she knew not why, felt a sad sinking at the heart, a melancholy and foreboding gloom upon her spirits, so often as she thought of Marmaduke's departure. After brief conversation on the subject, for neither felt inclined to talk at length, Alice, fatigued by the exertions and excitement of the day, retired without visiting her captive guest, her father having seen him in his crypt during her absence.

Long she lay tossing, sleepless, and restless, on her innocent couch; distracted with strange fancies, doubts, suspicions, and perplexities, succeeding one the other, like billows on an agitated sea. Now for the first time it would seem, a dim indefinite perception of the state of her affections began to steal across her mind; at first, it assumed the form of simple curiosity, a longing, fond desire to know if he, whom she had so long tended

with so affectionate care, would feel the same despondency and sorrow at quitting his poor place of refuge, which she endured already at the mere thought of his departure; then as she asked herself why should he?—why should he grieve at being rescued from a dull dreary prison-house, and let loose once again to active life, to liberty and daylight?—Nay, rather, why should he not rejoice with an extreme triumphant exultation? It naturally began to suggest itself to her, that her own sorrow and despondency was something more than ordinary; and, though she strove hard to convince herself that it was a mere natural regard for one with whom she had passed latterly many delightful hours, a common and unselfish interest in a fine, noble-minded man, who was no more to her than any other late acquaintance; all the heart's sophistry availed her nothing, but she was forced to entertain the question, did she then love?—could it be possible, that all unasked, uncourted, she had surrendered her soul's deep affection to this young gallant?—whe-

uld be, that a secret instinct, un-
f at the time and unsuspected, of
Vyvil, had led her to meet Cha-
lresses with so unqualified and final
? No! she discarded the idea by
impulse of alarmed and jealous

ld have been, she thought, the
overbold unmaidenly effrontery
rself unloved—it was impossible,
so. And then she closed her eyes,
ed a short pure prayer, and turn-
other side, bade such vain imagi-
aunt! and resolved positively, as
ht, to entertain the like no more.
thoughts are most insidious and
sts; and, once admitted into the
of the human mind, can scarcely
thence, but will creep forward—
nd forward still!—'till they have
e shrine and altar of that wondrous
guised perhaps, and hidden under
ous mask, but still unchanged and
active; and at the last, shake off

their counterfeited semblance, and kindle the whole place with the full blaze of confessed and over-mastering passion.

And so, on this occasion, was it with Alice Selby, one question still suggesting others, so that she scarcely had resolved to think no more of such things, before she was asking herself—"and was it then so certain that she was unloved; was it so clear, that it was not a secret instinct, that Marmaduke indeed did love her, which had called forth in her this mutual feeling?" Then she began to think of the peculiar tones of his voice, as he had spoken to her; to recall to mind the deep and concentrated glance of his expressive eye, which she had caught so often dwelling on her features, when he believed it all unnoticed; to reflect how his whole demeanour had been gradually changed towards her, from commonplace gay gallantry to calm, though by no means cold, observance.

She called to mind how often she had seen him raise his head, and partly open his lips as if to speak, after long intervals of thought-

ce, and again check himself by a effort, and relapse into meditation. ied too, that he had become more ought ful than was common, or in ce with his native disposition; that s a vein of melancholy in the alf-rambling strains of thought, into w and then, his conversation would e; and she was sure—the more sure she thought upon it, that he had s of late endeavoured, as it were, ner thoughts, to penetrate her in- l, and learn her real character, her inciples, her temper, and such other nore carefully than a mere passing ld have been likely to do, concern- cquaintance of a day. Thus her n still advanced, never one moment fault, till it had overleaped all ob- nd had persuaded her, before she a perturbed slumber, that she was Wyvil; and almost led her to con- she loved him in turn.

lowing morning she awoke all pale

and worn out, as it seemed, with mental excitation; but, after breakfast, she passed an hour or two chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy in the delicious solitude of her loved flower-garden, and returned thence refreshed indeed, by the pure autumn air, and the fresh scent of the rich upturned mould, but only confirmed the more fully, in the almost intuitive convictions which had come over her in the course of the past night. All that day long, however, she went not near the cell, excusing herself on some trivial plea, and prevailing, not without some small difficulty, on her father to relieve her of the charitable duty.

It seemed, moreover, as if anxiety and care were now to be the lot of all the family of Selby; for on his return from Wyvil's hiding-place, an eye considerably less acute than that of Alice could have discovered that something of far more than common moment had disturbed the serenity of old Mark's calm and steady equanimity. He settled himself down, indeed, to his books as usual, but it was very evident that his mind was no longer in the

task, for he would look up and fix his eyes steadfastly on the vacant air, and gaze for many minutes, and then shake his thin, gray locks doubtfully, and heave a long-drawn sigh; and then apply himself as it were reluctantly to the old commentaries once again, and read or write earnestly and eagerly for a few minutes; till gradually his powers of abstraction would prove unequal to the struggle against the powerful thoughts within, and he would raise his eyes once more to rivet them upon the lovely features of his fair, pallid child, and seem as if he were about to speak; but finding himself unequal to the task, would clear his throat with a deep husky cough, and brush away a tear from his gray lashes.

Thus passed the day, gloomily, cheerlessly, although the sky was bright and clear and sunny, and the air balmy, although fresh and bracing. Thus passed the day, with nothing worthy note to mark its fleeting hours, except that the head forester, who had been sent out with all his men, charged to search all the brakes and dingles of the park, but more

especially the old sand quarry, returned at night-fall, and reported that there were certainly no strangers now within the precincts of the park, although, as certainly, there had been poachers there a day or two before at farthest, for in the old stone pit he had found the white embers of a wood fire, the skin of a dead hare, the feathers of several pheasants, and, last not least, a bunch of admirably manufactured gins and springes, proving, beyond all question, the quality and occupation of its late visiters. Night came and passed away, and on the following morning, when Alice would again have eschewed visiting the young man, her father so decidedly, and, as she thought, with so much meaning in his tones, refused to take her place, and prayed her with an air so earnest, reminding her that she would have this duty, which seemed so irksome, to perform but one day longer; to go at once without more foolish and unkind delay, that she could not decline it, but found herself obliged, though most reluctantly, to visit Marmaduke with her accus-

burden. It would have been, per-
fficult for Alice to have explained
felt that reluctance, for she of late
ainly looked forward to the hour for
len interviews with interest, and not
rable agitation; and most assuredly
vil been at that moment a visiter at
her father's hospitable mansion, she
ot have shunned meeting him, or
hed to eschew his company. Most
it was a secret, and not unnatural,
modesty, now that she had become
of her own feelings, which hindered
seeking, as it might appear, an in-
with one she loved, but whose attach-
ard herself, if that he was indeed
was unavowed and buried in the
his own heart.

lt, too, it is more than likely that
eal, but at the same time most na-
ad that he, concerning whom her
had been so much engaged during
wo days, must have arrived during
period at the same conclusions with

herself—must have penetrated her secr
sympathies, and become the lord, as it we
and judge of all her hidden sentiments.
that she fancied it would appear to him
if she had come thither, had sought him o
in short, only to seek a solution of her o
doubts and fears ; to give him an oppor
nity of telling his passion, and of learni
that it was returned by equal, perhaps earl
passion of her own! The very thought ma
her cheeks burn with painful blushes, ma
her limbs tremble, and her tongue falter,
that it would in truth have been impossi
for any man of common penetration not
perceive that Alice, as she entered on t
morning the hiding-place of Wyvil, was un
the immediate influence of some strong mer
agitation.

So certain it is, that in women of the bet
order, the existence of deep passion is far m
frequently discovered to those from wh
they wish the most to hide it, through
very means they have adopted to conceal
than by direct and open revelation. Besi

very rare that a man, himself loving,
d to love a woman, can long remain
norance of her sentiments towards
nless in those flagitious cases, where
ans are taken by the designing and
to keep him in suspense and dark-
hen, therefore, Alice entered the
nber, though she had done so fifty
ast before, without exhibiting the
gns of confusion, it was with such
conscious bashfulness that Marma-
nce perceived the alteration in her
It would be now of no avail to trace
ess of his sentiments, to note how
eeds of future passion were sown
bosom, for to no one, who, with a
ngaged, and a heart free, has been
cidentally into the constant and
ociety of a young and very lovely
n it be a matter of wonder that
ut up as he was in absolute seclu-
ll the world, except one sweet and
irl, pre-eminently gifted with all
s that most adorn her sex and cap-

tivate the other, should have become enamoured, especially when to the strong attractions of beauty, wit, and gentleness, was superadded the strong plea of gratitude.

From the first moment of their meeting, marked as it was on her part by so much of high, though gentle spirit, by so much generosity, and readiness of mind, and courage, a deep sense of admiration had possessed him; and daily, more and more, that admiration, blended with warmer gratitude, and fostered by the constant observation of her sweet, womanly character, her gentleness, and easy grace, and artless frankness, had grown up into strong and burning love. Some hint of this Wyvil had casually, and indistinctly, perhaps half unintentionally, dropped to her father; and, instantly perceiving the change which followed his words, in the expression of the aged man, and coupling with that grave sad shadow, the absence of Alice from his cell, during two whole days, he had been torturing himself with every kind of vague and jealous fancy,

till he had worked himself into such a fever of hope, and rivalry, and anxious passion, that he felt almost ready to sacrifice and surrender every thing, so he could only be resolved what was the nature of her feelings. And, now, when she came in, with a faltering step, a cheek suffused with momentary crimson, and in a moment after, pallid as monumental marble; a downcast eye that suffered not one radiant glance to flash through the long lashes, and a perceptible air of timidity and agitation in her whole bearing and demeanor, he started hurriedly from his seat, and rushed to meet her, with his whole spirit beaming from his every feature.

"Oh!" cried he, in a passionate and broken voice, "why, oh why, have you deserted me? You do not, oh no! you cannot think how wretched I have been, how miserably sad, and anxious; have I offended you in any thing? Oh surely, surely not; for rather would I die a thousand deaths than that one thought of mine should wound you? or can it be that you are wearied, as well you may

be, of wasting your bright hours with a poor prisoner in his cheerless cell? Yet! yet, dear—dearest lady, could you but know how exquisite the pleasure is which you confer, even by your briefest visit, so it be lighted by one kind smile, one gentle glance of those compassionate eyes, you would not grudge a little weariness; you who are so soft-hearted, so charitable to the feelings of all others, so careless of your own, the while!—and that, too, when so short a time remains, before your task will have an end for ever.

"Yet, perchance, even this, this end which *I* cannot so much as contemplate, without a thrill of horror, is unto you a source of pleasure, of congratulation! You do not speak, you do not answer me!" he went on, without even giving her the time to answer, if she would, impetuously, and carried away by the torrent of his passions. "You *will* not answer me! I doubt not that you *are* glad, I leave you!"

As he spoke thus, Alice, who had stood paralyzed, and almost frightened at the ra-

and vehemence with which he poured his quick flood of words, raised her ashes slowly, and looked full in his with her large soft blue eyes dilated rprise, not all unmixed with appre-. "I do not understand you," she nply, after a little pause; "I do not at erstand you, Captain Wyvil; of course ad that you are about to be set free is prison, which you find, naturally, dull and dismal; of course, I am at you have a certain prospect of es-om your bloodthirsty enemies. I have ally been in terror, since you have lain dden, lest they should find you out. rse, I am glad, Captain Wyvil."

ought so! yes! by heaven! I thought claimed he; "glad to be rid of the elpless, ruined, runaway cavalier, who n, for so long time, a burden on your lity, a clog upon your gayer pleasures. ven! I do believe it is a joy to you to hat you shall never look upon me re, that you stand there so calm, and

quiet, and unmoved. Why, you had shown more emotion at the departure from your house of a mere servant, ay, I do well believe, even of a dog!"

"For a dog," answered poor Alice, quite dismayed at his strange vehemence, "would not turn and rend the hand that had been kind to him!" and with the words she burst into a flood of weeping, so passionate, and so convulsive, that if she had before appeared unmoved and self-possessed, such charge could now the least of all attach to her.

"You weep," he cried, "you weep; oh heavens! can it be, can it be that you feel any care, any regard—"

"Unkind," she answered, "oh ungenerous, and unkind; have I not risked *my* life, and what is dearer to me fiftyfold, my beloved father's! to conceal, and shelter, and protect you? Have I not gone forth in the night, provoking misconstruction, at the least, if not insult and actual outrage, to plan your safe escape? Have I not come to visit you and cheer your solitude, at all hours of the day,

and almost all of night; so that some might call me forward and unmaidenly. And should you now affront me with such questions? Out on it! is this generous or noble?"

"But all this," he replied; "you would have done as much for any other. It was an impulse—a kind, and noble, and heroic impulse!—but still an impulse only, that induced you at the first to offer me an asylum from my enemies. You would have offered it to Astley, or Prince Rupert—nay, to the profligate Wilmot, as you did offer it to me?"

"Ay!" Alice answered him, indignantly; "ay! or to any nameless fugitive, who had fought for his king, and whose life was in instant peril. Ay! by my word, to any Puritan even, whom I had seen with the avenger panting at his heels, and the sword thirsty for his life blood. To any man, however poor, or mean, or humble, I would have given shelter in the like case, until the peril were overpast. But if you think I would have risked my good report to aid

one whom I did not believe worthy—if you imagine I would have given my poor company to one so far above me as Prince Rupert—much more to one so base as fame speaks my Lord Wilmot—you neither know the character of a true woman, nor comprehend the heart of Alice Selby!"

"You would not?" he exclaimed, a strong and joyful light illuminating all his face, and his voice sinking to its tenderest and lowest tones; "you would not Alice, and you have not avoided me from any feeling of distaste, and you will not forget me so soon as I have left your doors, and you will suffer me to write, and tell you of my future fortunes?"

"It would be strange indeed," she answered, "if I could forget one very speedily, whom I have known so familiarly and well; if I were capable of doing so, my regard or remembrance were little worth the having."

"But shall I have them, Alice; but shall I have them?" he cried, eagerly, "for by my soul! if I have not, I care not for my life a

!! I care not whether I escape at all!
o God you never had stepped forth
ne! that I had never looked upon
, for it will haunt me to my grave,
l on my heart's inmost core in living
ll I then, have them, Alice, and will
ne write to you?"
surely I shall not forget you, most
shall often think of you; shall be
hear of your welfare. My father,
s, will rejoice that you should write
your whereabouts and your well-
or me it were not maidenly to re-
ters from a stranger."
ranger," he broke forth again, half
half sadly, "a stranger! and is it I,
ave for days, nay weeks, but lived to
ach glance of your soft eyes, but fed
ur smiles— is it I whom you call a
? Oh! cold, how cold and haughty."
say not cold! oh, say not haughty,
Wyvil," she answered, eagerly, while
d rushed in torrents to her pale cheek,
deed, indeed, I am neither, but tell

me what else but a stranger could the world term you?"

"The world!" he said, "the world!" with a contemptuous sneer curling his upper lip, and a thick frown gathering on his brow; "the base, uncharitable, fickle, cold, hard, world! And is it—can it be Alice Selby—the pure, high-minded, self-sustained, and noble Alice Selby, that bends to the brute clamour of the knaves and fools, whom all trucklers and cowards, fawners upon the great, and grinders of the poor, have styled —as if in mockery—THE WORLD? Can it be, that she shapes her conduct to meet the whimsies of the beggarly mob—or regards any way the censure of that blast of frowzy and unsavory breaths that bruit the world's opinion?"

"It can be," she replied, "it is; and I am sorry that you should think otherwise. I think I have shown already that in a good cause, where humanity, or charity, or honour, point one way, while the world's opinion might be deemed likely to lead elsewhere, I

have shown to which I yield obe-
But where the general voice is con-
by the small, still voice within—the
at speaks the loudest in dead silence;
cases where to obey it, is to conflict
superior mandate, to bar no higher
quite sure Alice Selby *does* regard
ure, *does* shape her course to the
of what men style the world, to
which, there go not all the knaves
fools only, but all the great and
virtuous, the high-minded, and the
this and bygone generations! Be
Alice Selby does bend to this great
d be sure, Captain Wyvil, oh, be
t she who does not, is neither a
ded lady, nor yet a pure true-hearted
But to pass this, what would you
style you; what would you style
if not a stranger?"

lover!" he replied impetuously,
himself at her feet, and clasping her
embling hand, which she strove

feebly to withdraw, and impotently, "your true, devoted, honorable lover! you must have seen, you must have known! oh, Alice, Alice, you cannot have been ignorant thus long how deeply, passionately, madly, I adore you. You cannot but have seen, have known all this—and knowing it, you cannot have permitted me to rush unchecked and hopeful into the agony, the anguish, the despair of loving you, adoring you in vain!" and with the words, as she had let her head fall almost on her bosom, while her hand rested passively in his, and he might see the big tears stealing silently down her pale cheeks, he rose and stood respectfully beside her; and after gazing for a moment earnestly on her emotion; "I hope," he added, I trust Alice, I have not mistaken you—these are not tears of grief, or of vexation, Alice?"

For a second's space or more, she stood in breathless silence; then with an effort, as it were, she raised her head a little, and strove to look him in the face; but she could not

and let fall her eyes again, sobbing
ting as though her heart would

Alice—loveliest Alice," he whis-
derly, " answer me I beseech you ;
ı may not answer, press but my
e me some silent token," and then
ed, and no sign was given that she
would regard his fond entreaties.
ut right, and fitting your own
he said, something more coolly
re, but still affectionately; for there
hing in her manner, that told him
ot insensible to his addresses, " that
d give me now an answer. For do
for a moment—I am certain that
t fancy for a moment, Alice—that
who would entrap a maiden into
nts unknown to her parents. Not
s—not to win thee, even thee,
ıld I do aught—require aught that
voke the sternest father's censure,
call forth a blush, a sigh, a sorrow,
rom her whom I would make my

wife, when long years should have flow
and the deceptive meteor of strong passi
faded from the horizon of the mind.

"I am a gentleman, as Master Sel
knows, of honorable birth, of station, on
of fortune—not, though I say it, all u
known to fame; and, though deprived
my estates by this disastrous civil strife, r
so impoverished or needy, but with a bo
heart, and my good sword to boot, I c
maintain my lady, as a Wyvil's lady and
Selby's daughter should be maintained—
honour. Now, therefore, Alice, since I ha
laid my whole heart open to you, since y
cannot but say that I have dealt with y
in frankness and sincerity, surely you will
frank with me and open. If you can lo
me, as I hope—oh, Heaven, how fervent
as I sometimes have almost thought y
could—let me speak of it to your go
father; if not, at least relieve me from t
agony of this suspense, and let me go r
way, a wretched and heart-broken bei
to seek my death, as the best boon that G

can grant me, at the pike's point, or in the cannon's mouth. Will you not—will you not say, then, that you love me?"

While he was still in the act of speaking, the little hand which he had held so long imprisoned in his own, returned the pressure of his fingers, but that so slightly, and with so timid and so fluttering a touch, that it was scarce perceptible; still it was felt, it gave him hope, that he continued to the end, observing that she listened to his every word with deep attention; and that her tears, although they still flowed, gushed not now with that convulsive violence which had almost alarmed him at the first, but trickled from her long, deep lashes, in a calm, unpainful current; and now, as his voice ceased, she raised her eyes to his, full of a sweet and dovelike tenderness, that stilled his every apprehension in a moment; and a bright, radiant smile glanced through her falling tears, like a first April sunbeam shimmering through the raindrops of a morning shower. Words were, perhaps, scarce needed; for

the calm light of that pure, artless fa
fraught with a quiet happiness, spoke mo
than volumes; yet, feeling that it was h
duty to speak out, "Oh, Captain Wyvi
she said, in a voice which, though low a
musical, was now quite firm, and trembl
not at all; "Oh, Captain Wyvil, now y
have made me very happy."

"Alice, my own, own Alice," he exclai
ed, clasping her by a sudden impulse in
arms, while her fair head, with all its ri
profusion of brown curls, drooped on
shoulder like a white lily overcharged wi
dewdrops. "Will you, indeed, indeed,
mine for ever."

"For ever, Marmaduke," she faltered for
in tones scarce audible, "for ever, and
ever;" their eyes met as she spoke the wor
full of true chaste affection; and as he dr
her fondly to his bosom, their lips met lik
wise in the first thrilling love-kiss; wh
from behind, a deep sonorous voice, firm
than often issues from the organs of the ag
breathed forth "Amen! amen! my childr

lessings be upon you both—and may
lessing, without which mine is no-
e with you both for ever !"
s Mark Selby, who, alarmed some-
the protracted absence of his daughter,
ıe to seek her, and actually had stood
ıll sight of both—although they were
ı absorbed in the strong ecstasy of
that they had neither ears nor eyes
ıt beside themselves—during the last
ıutes. Marmaduke started at the
ınd turned round with a hurried
; but the expression of his features
ıquil, open, and quite fearless.
ay you think not—," he began, but,
ould say any more, the old man inter-
ıim.
ve no need to think, Captain Wyvil,
ıave heard every word you have
these ten minutes past. I did not
listen, you may be quite sure—but I
rd so much before I could attract
tice, that I believed it best to let this
ld answer you, before my presence

could any way affect or influence her choice. I thank you, for your noble manly candour; and I can give you no more proof of my belief in your high qualities, than in surrendering to you this peerless jewel—this my heart's latest idol." And he embraced the lovely girl with a long, agonizing ecstasy of fondness, while the big tears rushed forth like summer rain from his old lids, and mingled with the calmer drops that dewed the cheeks of Alice. "God grant that you prove worthy of her, and bless you both, and keep you, here and hereafter, with his boundless mercy!"

CHAPTER IV.

THREE days had passed since Bartram's interview with Alice, and the third sun had set, and night was falling fast over the lovely scenery of Woolverton, when three men, well armed with quarter-staves and broad-swords but without any fire-arms, came cautiously out of one of the dense coppices that lined the old park wall, and stealing with light steps and wakeful eyes across the open lawn, ensconced themselves in a thick brake of holly bushes which grew on the brink of the stream, not very far from the bridge which Chaloner had so manfully defended, and the

scene of Sherlock's bold equestrian exploit
A few minutes after they had hidden them
selves, the gate-house clock struck seven
and while its chimes were still ringing
through the woodlands, the distant flourish
of a cavalry trumpet came floating on the
night-wind, and the faint sounds of a squa
dron on the march.

About half an hour later, in the green
winding lane that led from the Stag's Head
past the lodges into the Worcester turnpike
some hundred yards below the park gates, a
troop of the Ironsides was drawn up, the men
sitting motionless on their strong horses, with
their drawn broadswords in their hands
while their captain and two subalterns, hav
ing dismounted from their chargers, stood a
few paces in advance conversing eagerly
though in low guarded tones, keeping strict
watch, as it would seem, even while they
talked most earnestly.

"I do believe for my part," whispered one
"that it is a mere cheat and trepan. For
what, I do beseech you, should we watch

here, when any one could see us at fifty paces distance, or farther, if he had occasion to fear any thing?"

"I do somewhat mistrust the same," replied another; "yet sure I am that letter was in Despard's hand, and he was ever a staunch bloodhound on the track of any cavalier. Besides, we have our orders; and, at the worst, it is but a night-ride, and a cold halt here for an hour or so. Move hence I will not, until the clock strike nine. Hush! was not that a sound, by the ditch-side there?"

At the same moment, when he spoke, a vidette, who was thrown forward some eight or ten yards in advance, brought up his carbine to the post, and challenged loudly—but no reply was made, nor was the least noise heard again, though the whole party listened with ears sharpened by the most anxious expectation.

Just as these things were going on without the park, matters were drawing rapidly toward a crisis within the walls; for as it grew more dark, two other men, one a tall stout

athletic countryman, the other a short thick-set figure, somewhat apparently advanced in years, but active still, and vigorous, came out from a plantation nearer the Stag's Head Inn than the coppice whence the three former had emerged; and coming up to the stream, which was quite shallow in that place rippling swiftly over a gravel bed, couched themselves in the long grass, exactly opposite the mouth of a low cave, which lay in a right line under the holly brake, wherein the others were ensconced, at some ten paces distant.

The three men who had come first to the ground, surveyed the others quietly as they came up, and remarked to one another with a grim air of satisfaction, that they had no arms except staves, and perhaps pistols which they would not, even if they had them dare to use for fear of attracting observation but neither they, nor the new comers saw that a sixth man was soon after added to their number, who came out crouching from the coppice at the very spot whence the

ree had issued, with strange and un-
gestures, stooping at times quite to the
, and crawling on his hands and knees,
; as it appeared for some track on the
grass, which he examined carefully
is hands, and seemed at times even
f at like a hound trailing a doubt-
nt. By these means, and by slow
, he followed exactly on the steps of
d and his comrades, for it was they
y hid in the hollies, till he was now
six feet of their very lair; but in so
lence had he crawled up from behind,
th so much sagacity, as it appeared,
tion, that they had neither heard
or suspected his approach; then, rais-
head somewhat, he cast a wild glance
him, and again seemed to snuff the
d then, as if contented, sank quietly
nto the covert, which grew thick and
y on the river's margin.

he same silent hour, in the deepest
the low heronry wood, hard by a
path, winding among the swampy

brakes, upon the firmer ground, which led from a narrow postern in the park-wall, to the same green lane which has so many times been mentioned, entering it a mile or more westward of the Stag's Head, stood a young man, appareled as a forester, holding two noble chargers: one a blood-bay, with coal-black mane and tail, the other a dark iron-gray, both of them evidently thorough-bred and that of the best strain of blood, but very plainly harnessed, with hunting-saddles, somewhat old and used, rude leather bridles, and coarsely-fashioned holsters; yet were they exquisitely groomed, and in superb condition; their skins as smooth and soft as velvet and so bright, that they actually glittered even in the few faint starbeams that stole through the floating clouds which clothed the moonless skies. A short, but heavy musquetoon, leaned against the bole of a huge ash-tree close beside him, with a large noble bloodhound lying upon the ground near to it.

Meanwhile, within the hall all had been

prepared for Marmaduke's escape; a tearful and most passionate farewell had passed between the cavalier and his affianced bride, between whom it had been arranged, that so soon as they should be certainly advised of his arrival on the safe coast of France, every exertion should be made to procure his free pardon—a thing by no means to be despaired of, when he should once be out of reach of capture; and failing that, and no change for the better occurring in the state of politics at home, that Alice, under her father's escort, should follow him to France, and there become his wife, under a milder rule and in a happier realm than poor distracted England. This settled, when they had torn themselves for the last time asunder, old Selby led his guest through all the devious passages, and let him out at the gate which communicated with the arched drain, promising to wait there for an hour, unless he should return before that period had elapsed. He had not long to wait, however, as it happened—for within twenty minutes Wyvil returned in

haste and breathless, and told his anxious friend, how, finding that the token he expected was not in its place, he had crept cautiously to the drain-mouth, and thence discovered a party of the Ironsides, posted as if upon the watch, with carbines ready, and drawn broadswords—that he had been challenged by a vidette, but had got off, as he believed, unseen and unsuspected.

This explanation passed, while they were hastening, after the gate had been sufficiently secured behind them, toward the other outlet; and when they reached it, once more affectionately pressing the young soldier to his bosom, the noble-minded old man bade him go at once, taking God's blessing with him, and waited long and anxiously, holding the door in hand, before he ventured again to make it fast; but no more was he disturbed that night, and when two hours had passed, he rejoined Alice, to soothe her with the comfortable tidings, that doubtless her young lover had escaped so far securely on his way seaward.

The clock had not yet struck eight, when Wyvil reached the mouth of the low cavern; and though, as he peered stealthily out of its narrow opening into the misty darkness, he could discover no sign of any persons on the watch, he was yet mindful of the pedlar's message, and took good care to show no part of his person—not so much as the tips of his moustaches—beyond the entrance. He did not lie there very long, however, before a keen, shrill whistle rose from the tall fern on the farther margin of the rivulet, and was again and again repeated, with an interval of perhaps twenty seconds between each signal; no person, indeed, showed himself, yet Marmaduke, who had on many a former occasion held intercourse with Bartram, knew the sharp call so well, that he did not hesitate a moment to extricate himself from the sandy burrow, and descend into the channel of the stream.

At the very instant, however, in which he left the cavern, several heavy stones and a quantity of loose earth came rolling down

from the bank above, and, before they ha
reached the bottom of the declivity, thre
tall, stout men, by whose feet they had bee
spurned from the summit, leaped down upo
him, calling aloud, and bidding him surren
der " In the name of God, and the Commo
wealth of England."

Marmaduke had in fact scarcely got sur
foothold, when the enemy was on him; ye
he turned sharply round to face them, draw
ing his rapier as he did so, while, even i
that anxious moment, he had presence
mind to take note that Sherlock and th
pedlar had sprung out of their covert, at th
unexpected onslaught, and were rushin
down to his assistance with all speed.

Too late, however, was he in his mov
ment, for ere his sword was well out of i
scabbard, and long before he could uplift
to parry or to strike, a sweeping blow of
huge two-handed quarter staff was dealt hi
on the right side of the head, which felle
him instantly into the channel of the strean
very lucky was it for him that he had turne

completely round before the blow took effect, for, as he dropped, the first man sprang upon him, kneeling upon his breast as he lay face upward in the shallow water, and grappling his throat with both hands; so that, stunned as he was by the blow, and helpless to arise, he must have necessarily been suffocated, had he fallen on his face, before the struggle ended.

Meanwhile the other ruffians, seeing that Marmaduke was for the moment quite unable to resist, rushed upon Bartram and the gallant farmer, pressing them so hard with their long two-edged rapiers, against which the others had nothing but their oaken staves, that it was quite impossible for them to offer any aid to the young cavalier; and that they had more than enough to do to defend themselves, and must have been slain speedily, or have surrendered, had not a new auxiliary rushed suddenly, and that most unexpectedly, upon the scene. A long, protracted, and most fearful howl gave the first note of his approach, as the person, who had lain hidden in the

brake immediately behind the ruffians, darted with strange fantastic bounds and frantic gestures, down the steep river bank, and seizing Despard, for he it was who knelt so cowardly on the young soldier's chest, tore him away from his hold as if he had been a mere child; and shaking him for a moment at arm's length, with another howl, fiercer, and shriller, and more fiendish in its tones than any yell that ever issued from the lips of man, even of the untameable and savage Indian, hurled him to the earth, and leaping like a tiger on his prey, grasped, with his fingers strangely and fearfully contorted, the wind-pipe of his tortured victim, compressing it with all his might, and dashing his head up and down upon the ragged flints, 'till the blood gushed from it in torrents, gibbering all the while, and uttering a low chuckling laugh of triumph, that when connected with the savage fury of his onset, was perhaps even more revolting than the long beastlike howl which had preceded it.

All this passed in a moment, in far less

han it has taken to describe it, for as
s he was released from the weight of
rd, the temporary faintness produced
e stunning blow having immediately
l to the effects of the cold water, which
mpletely overflowed his face and tem-
Wyvil sprang to his feet, brandishing
ord which he had never let go for
ient, and hurried to the aid of his
nions, who were overmatched in the
l combat; but eagerly as he leaped
d, he was yet all too late: for when
eard that wild and devilish outcry, and
fourth man rushing from the brake,
they had believed to be tenanted by
lves alone, and dealing such extraor-
retribution on their comrade, the su-
ous terrors—the only terrors to which
ere accessible—of the two desperadoes,
roused.

is the fiend!" cried one, "fly, fly! in
ame!" and, with the word, leaving their
ponents unquestioned masters of the
nd wondering only that they were not

pursued, the ruffians broke away, and rushing through the scattered bushes, sought the wild woods, and actually ran miles, before they paused even for a moment, in mute and breathless consternation. But not for that did the death struggle cease between the disgraced roundhead soldier and his uncouth antagonist; strong as he was, and desperately as he struggled for his life, striking violent although impotent blows with a dagger, which he had contrived to draw, and striving by the most fearful muscular efforts to dislodge his inveterate antagonist, yet all his efforts were in vain; for his persecutor clung to his throat with an iron grasp, and wrenched his head completely round, still muttering, and gibbering, and laughing with a fierce fiendish glee, and making horrible grimaces—grinding his strong white teeth till the foam flew from his lips, like froth churned from the tusks of the hunted boar, and falling on the face of the dying puritan, was blent into a frightful lather, all clothed with the gore that flowed from his deep wounds.

And now the smothered imprecations, the broken sobs, and gasps of the throttled roundhead, were changed into the dread death-rattle; his eyeballs rolled up meaningless; his lips were painfully convulsed and white as ashes, while all the rest of his countenance was purple almost to blackness, with the blood forced into all his pores by that strong gripe; the dagger fell from his relaxed and nerveless fingers; a sharp quick shudder shot through his whole frame, and then all was still; the powerful, limbs became collapsed and flaccid; the staring eyes, half starting from their sockets, glazed with a dull white film; the chest, that heaved of late with energy so terrible, inert and motionless; and all the fiery passions, the inordinate lust of gold, the hot insatiable ambition, the recklessness of human life, the strong fixed purpose, the undaunted courage which but now fluttered in that living throbbing heart — were all quenched, and darkened, and at rest for ever!

Ere Wyvil and his trusty friends could reach the scene of the protracted struggle—

for although he was himself quite ignorant of the persons, both of his assailant and his rescuer, Bartram and Sherlock suspected the identity of both—*knew* that of one, from the first utterance of the awful outcry that harbingered his coming. All was completely over; and as they came up, Martin Rainsford, for it was the poor idiot whose instinctive hate for Despard had worked out Marmaduke's deliverance, uprose from the dead body, and actually danced on the cold senseless clay, in the wild exultation of his mad revenge.

"Ha! ha!" he cried aloud, articulately, and in a clear, high voice. "Ha! ha! rogue Roundhead, wilt kill more faithful guardians of the weak?—wilt beat poor Martin?—wilt do more evil now?—wilt shed more blood? Not thou, I warrant me, not thou! Ha! ha!—ha! ha!" and then the spirit of appalling vengeance which, it would seem, had gifted him with a new and strange instinct, to hunt out and destroy the slayer of his favourite mastiff, deserted him at once;

fell down, as helpless and as nerve-
the body of his victim, upon the
ained sod, beside it, in a dread epi-
paroxysm.

w, before Heaven!" exclaimed the
who, as he looked upon that awful
e, bold as he was, and fearless, and
customed to look unmoved on blood-
lt his cheek pale, and his hair bristle
w, before Heaven! although we owe
ety to it, this thing is very terrible!
ot boy hath slain him, and is, I do
sped by some chance blow like-

w God forbid it be so!" cried John
k, kneeling down as he spoke, be-
boy; "for if it were so, it would kill
dame outright, and bring sweet Ma-
the grave, ere many months had
But no," he said—"but no! he is
d, nor even wounded—he hath but
a fit, such as he ever takes after un-
and unusual excitement."

o is he then?" asked Wyvil; "who

is he? do you know him? and who is this that he has slain?"

"We have no time to talk of such things, Captain Wyvil," answered the pedlar, hastily; "we must fly straightway. Meantime, we must leave you, John Sherlock, to settle all the rest. I fear me much this dead man and those runaways will call forth fresh suspicion against good Master Selby."

"Not it! not it!" replied Sherlock; "those cowardly dogs who ran, were but chance fellows of that dead ruffian yonder. I know them well; they are the same thieves who set on Mistress Alice—disbanded desperadoes of the royal army, escaped, I trow, from the defeat at Worcester, and forced to rob and pillage by sheer want. How they fell in with this knave Despard, I know not, and marvel at it too; but we may rest quite certain that they will not tell aught of what has passed this night—in truth, they dare not, for they will fly the puritans, as the hare flies the greyhound; and for their lives they dare not tell a cavalier how they would have betrayed

ptured one of their own party. No,
fear of them; and as for this dead
will tie such a stone about his neck
l find its way with him to the bottom
deep black pool underneath the wa-
below there. It will rain hard, too,
daylight; and that will wash away
es of this scuffle; I will get Martin
anon, and frame some story how I
im in a fit out in the fields; that will
, too, for the blood upon his gar-
and if he say aught of it—as he
ery like, poor fellow!—seeing he does
ak thrice between Lent and Christ-
o one will notice it at all. Now,
ve you good speed, Master Bartram!
y not here, I beseech you, else shall
lose our pains. Safe journey to you,
; I think you will 'scape scot free,
's done. But I say, Bartram, not a
Frank Norman of this job—not a
or your life!"

, no!" replied the pedler, "it is a bad
s as it is, and I'll not make it worse,

depend on it. Come, Captain Wyvil, John's in the right of it, we must make hay while the sun shines;" and with the words, he started at a long, swinging pace, that brought them within a few minutes to the posterngate, which had been left ajar on purpose; so that they passed unhindered into the heronry wood, closing the door, which was fastened by a spring lock, carefully behind them. A few steps further brought them to the spot where Norman held the horses; and, mounting instantly, scarce interchanging five words with the forester, they rode away as quickly as the nature of the ground would permit, until they reached the lane.

There Bartram set spurs to his bold bay horse, and put him resolutely at the strong quickset hedge, which separated it from the cultivated fields, clearing it with a gallant leap. Marmaduke followed not a horse's length behind; and thence they drove at a hard gallop athwart the open country, sweeping in their career across wide brooks and over stiff inclosures, unchecked and fearless;

for they dared not trust themselves on the high roads, which were patrolled by parties from the neighbouring garrisons, until they reached a lonely hovel on the verge of a vast tract of forest-land, with the Welch mountains rising dark beyond it against the cloudy sky.

There a small, clownish boy was stationed with a relay of fresh horses, equal in strength, and blood, and spirit to those which had so nobly born them hitherward; and, mounting upon these without a moment's pause, they again dashed into a wild wood-road, already twenty miles at least from the park-walls of Woolverton, and farther yet from the head-quarters of the Ironsides. Long before midnight, as Sherlock had predicted, it began to rain; and in less than an hour from the commencement of the storm, it waxed into as wild a gale as ever ushered in the winter equinox, with heavy rain and sleet, and raving gusts of wind, and ever and anon a crashing peal of

thunder; yet they paused not, nor slacked their long, hard gallop, for liberty and life were on their speed, and they were not the men to lose them by any lack of hardihood or daring.

CHAPTER V.

ABOVE six months had passed after the flight of Wyvil, yet had no tidings of his safety arrived to cheer the gentle heart of Alice, for it was autumn still when he effected his escape from Woolverton, and now winter was over, and the earlier months of spring-time, and the young days of June were scattering their sweets over the smiling earth. But it was on a different scene from any yet described, and in a distant country, that the sun, verging fast toward the west, was pouring his soft light, when the events occurred wherewith we purpose to resume our narra-

tive. It was a wild and broken country covered in many parts with heavy woods and tangled thickets, full of ravines, and intersected by a number of small streams and rivulets, and altogether as unlike the environs of a great city as can be well imagined; yet it was in the very heart of France, scarcely ten leagues from the metropolis, lying between Corbeil upon the Seine, and the small town of Villeneuve, yet nearer to the gates of Paris.

Among the defiles then it was, which intersected at that day the forest land that covered so much of that part of France, and at an advanced hour of the evening, that a small band of horsemen were advancing slowly and with much caution, as if they had been almost in the face of an enemy. They were not above ten in number, and consisted, as might be seen at a glance, of two gentlemen with their train of armed attendants; yet there was something in the style of their accoutrements and harness which showed that they were either actually engaged in some military service, or at least were prepared

ne unusual danger, for although those
mes wherein no gentleman went forth
ed, or without soldierlike retainers, still
quite unusual for either men or masters
defensive armour unless in actual war-

leaders of the party, who rode some
three horses' length in front of their
rs, were both young men, and emi-
handsome; but as different as it is
to conceive in the style of their

He who rode to the right was
a complete suit of bright steel; an
elmet, with a tall plume of os-
athers, covered his head, and cast a
shade over a face the hues of which
aturally, of the darkest that are ever
Europeans; his eyes were of a quick
trous black, full of enthusiastic life,
id energy; his features manly and
yet at the same time delicately
and singularly handsome; a small
ck moustache pencilled his short-

curved upper lip, and a profusion of bla
curls fell down beneath the rim of his bri
morrion, over the gorget and cuirass, wh
armed his body. Taslets of steel were
his thighs, and his legs, from the knee dov
ward, were protected by stout boots of
lished leather, bedecked with the gilt sp
of knighthood; a long straight broadsw
suspended from a scarf of white silk, fring
with gold, and pistols of two feet in leng
completed the accoutrements of the you
chevalier.

His comrade, though he was mounted
a noble charger, and though he wore b
sword and pistols, was less elaborately h
nessed; for, in place of a helmet, he had
hat of black velvet, with a band of wh
feathers running round it, a mode which v
at that time in its first commencement, a
deemed the very point device of milit
foppery. A coat of marone-coloured velv
with a cuirass above it, crossed by a wh
scarf, like his friend's, breeches and gauntl

ite chamois leather, and polished riding
were the nearest of any thing he wore
itary decoration.

nething too of the same distinction which
not but be noticed in the accoutrements
leaders was perceptible in those of the
ers, for while the four stout, able-bodied
who followed the last-mentioned rider,
vidently nothing more than the ordinary
servants of the day, the others were un-
onably regular troopers, and as such were
ed with the heaviest horse armour of
ne. It was not in their dress, however,
the style of their arms, that the prin-
ifference between the gentlemen of the
consisted, for while the soldiers' hair
es and whole complexion were extra-
rily dark, his comrade was distinguished
the attributes of English beauty, fair
nd rich brown locks, and—but it needs
describe him further, for no one who
er seen him could have failed to dis-
n the gay cavalier of France the person
English Wyvil.

"Well, Captain Wyvil" said the dark featured soldier, turning toward his companion, after a long pause in their conversation, "here are we now, within a scant league of Villeneuve St. George, and night fast drawing on and not a sign can we discover, not a word can we learn from any one of this advance so loudly bruited of Monsieur de Lorraine. I begin shrewdly to suspect those intercepted letters were but a ruse of the princes to force Turenne to raise the leaguer of Etampes! I am in doubt how to proceed, for we have reconnoitred all the country hither, and the marechal's orders were distinct that we should not cross the Ilyère, and here it is, just in the hollow way beyond that wooded hill. There you can see its waters glittering in the sunshine, three miles or so to the eastward by the top of yon ash-tree."

"I scarce know how to counsel you, Bellechassaigne," replied the other, "not knowing how the country lies, nor what hamlets or farm-houses are scattered through this forest. It will not do, however, to fall back on the

marechal without some sure intelligence. If we can go so far forward without incurring much risk of discovery, as to get a view from yon hill top, I think we ought to do so. For thence by what you say we shall be enabled to overlook Villeneuve, and see, if nothing more, whether the troops of Lorraine have occupied that town in force."

"Forward, then forward," cried the other gaily. "There is some peril in it certainly, for if Monsieur is in Villeneuve at all, be sure he has outposts on this side the river, the rather that the cross road from Brie comte Robert and Grosbois intersects there with this by which we are advancing. But where the devil would the fun be in warfare any more than in dull peace, if there were not a spice of danger in it? So forward, I say, forward!"

"Let it be quickly then," said Marmaduke, "for as you said but now, it is fast waxing late, and if we are to have some fighting we may as well have light to do it by, and if not, then it behoves us to look out for a snug

place to bivouac, before it grows too dark to choose one."

"Forward then—trot!" cried Bellechassaigne, raising his voice so that its tones could reach the ears of the men behind, striking his charger at the same time with the spur; "and now I think of it," he added, "it were as well to be upon our guard—Unsling your carbines, look to your matches, and be ready!"

As the last order issued from his lips they had reached the bottom of a small sandy hollow, the road bordered on either hand by a thick growth of coppice, with here and there a tall tree interspersed, and winding up a long ascent in front of them to the summit of the woody hill, whence they expected to overlook the level country toward the junction of the Seine and Maine, in which direction it was reported that the Prince of Lorraine was advancing. The command was obeyed promptly, and with their musquetoons thrown forward, and eye, ear, heart on the alert, the troopers trotted rapidly up the

rough stony hill—and now they were within a hundred yards of the summit, and a few seconds more would have placed them on the verge, in full view of whatever there might be beyond its woody screen, when, suddenly, a faint, long note, as of a trumpet if keenly winded, but far distant, came down the summer wind; the quick ear of Bellechassaigne caught it upon the instant.

"'Halt!" he cried, "halt! we are upon them, Wyvil."

"Let us two, then, dismount," returned the Englishman, leaping to the ground as he spoke; "we may creep on under the covert of those fir-trees, and reconnoitre them with ease. Here," he continued, turning to his servants, "here, Adam, hold my charger, and see you stir not without orders. Best doff your helmet, Bellechassaigne, its glitter would betray us, if a stray sunbeam should flash from it."

The gay young Frenchman smiled, and vaulted lightly from his charger, unclasped

the chin-strap of his morion, and tossed
to the nearest of his troopers; then drawir
out his pistols from the holsters, he wave
his hand to Wyvil, and they advanced t
gether with stealthy steps, until they ha
reached the brow of the hill, when the
crept into the covert to the right-hand
the road, where a thick tuft of stunted fi
tress afforded a sure hiding-place, and we
lost to the eyes of their followers.

Scarce had they made three steps into th
shadow, before a vast and glorious landscap
was spread out like a map before them;
wide, rich champaign, covered with the ta
crops of waving grain and fertile pasture
checkered with woods and orchards, an
dotted with a thousand hamlets, the broa
bright courses of the Seine and Marne rol
ing in silver labyrinths among the verdure
and the blue domes and gothic spires of th
metropolis just seen through the thin haz
which curtained the horizon. Nearer an
in the foreground, as it were, of this gran

picture, lay the small town of Villeneuve, beyond the river Ilyère, which wound, now seen, now lost, among the glades of the thick wood that clothed the northern slope of the height whereon they stood, down to the margin of the stream; and the broad yellow road by which they had advanced, receded in long, clear, perspective, downward to the stone-bridge and the barriers of the town.

It must not be supposed, however, that the two partizans had any leisure to survey the beauties of the scene, or even to consider whether the landscape in itself was beautiful or not, so absolutely were their senses occupied in reconnoitring its military points, and judging of its occupation by the enemy. Nor was it very difficult to form a judgment on this point; for at the first glance they might see a hostile standard hoisted upon the bridge, and a small guard of horse in foreign uniforms on duty at the gate ; while in three different spots of the more distant champaign, they could distinguish clearly

three large and powerful divisions, evidently each in communication with the others, marching as fast as possible on Villeneuve.

"Now," exclaimed Bellechassaigne, "now we may go our ways as hard as we can gallop, and tell Turenne what we have seen —for here are the advanced guard of Lorraine's horse on the Ilyère already; and certainly the rearmost of those three infantry divisions will be within the town before to-morrow noon,—the marechal must march right rapidly if he means to fight monsieur, before he can cross the Seine. So let us get to horse, good friend, and make the best of our way back to Corbeil; we will halt for an hour or two at the little village where we breakfasted, and we can join the marechal before daybreak."

"Hold! hold a moment," returned Wyvil—"one moment, Bellechassaigne! Look down into the valley yonder—there, in that hollow by the holly-bushes—just where the other road comes into the cross-road from

sbois, about which you were speaking. not the same ?"

Yes, yes; but what of that ?" asked the ng officer. " Ha ! by my soul !" he add- as he turned his eyes to the spot indi- l by his comrade, " they are in ambush e—two—four—six. Now by St. Denis, e are a score of troopers in the thicket hat in the devil's name can they be wait- for ?"

ust as he spoke, however, his question answered by the appearance of a nted servant, or *avant courier*, dressed livery of dark-blue cloth, splendidly l with gold, who wheeled into the cause- , and, turning his horse toward the hill reon the partizans were standing, came way very rapidly without perceiving soldiers who were lying in the thicket. noment or two afterward, one of the y coaches of the day, drawn by six es with postilions, dressed in the same lsome livery as the courier, came lum- ng round the corner of the wood, two

stout armed servants following, one of whom led a charger equipped with demipique and holsters, and the rich housings of a general officer of the king's party.

Scarcely had the last servant come fully into sight, before the quick flash of a carbine streamed out of the dark evergreens; and, before the sound of the report was borne to the ears of the young soldiers, the courier, horse and man, fell headlong to the ground, rolling over and over among the clouds of dust, which surged up from the sandy road, and for a moment cut off all view of the scene of action. The rattle of a volley, however, which instantly succeeded, showed that the cowardly murder which they had seen committed, was but the prelude to worse outrage. As quick as lightning, Marmaduke, when he saw the flash, and almost before he could perceive its result, turned round and rushed toward the horses, waving, as he did so, to his men to come forward; and they, catching his signal on the instant, came up so promptly, that

he was in his saddle before Bellechassaigne overtook him, though he had followed him in hot anxiety, fearing some deed of rashness on his part, the moment he observed his movements.

"Are you mad, Wyvil?" he exclaimed—"are you mad—that you think of charging twenty armed troopers with a handful such as ours? and that, too, when the twenty will be supported within ten minutes by a hundred, and, above all, for a matter that concerns us nothing. By heaven! man, we shall be cut to pieces, or made prisoners in five minutes; and what is worse than that, Turenne will get no tidings of the advance of these Lorrainers. *Tête dieu!* It's well he sent me with you as a curb on your impetuous valour!"

"By the Lord! but it does concern us, Bellechassaigne," answered Wyvil, hastily; "did you not see the housings of the charger? There is a general officer of the king's there; and I doubt nothing, it is Sir Henry Oswald, whom Monsieur de Turenne

and our good Duke of York are hou
pecting from Sedan, by Chalons an
lommiers. I will die with my men or
him. Bear you the tidings to Tu
Forward, men, gallop!" and with the
he dashed his spurs into his horse's
shook off Bellechassaigne's grasp,
was upon his rein, and followed by h
vants, dashed over the brow of the hi
thundered down its other slope at a
which made itself audible to the ears
comrade, for a minute at least after
lost sight of him.

The trooper shook his head, and mu
a few words very bitterly; but he
mounted, as his horse was led up by
diers, and rode, though with much c
and at a slow pace, to the brow b
which Wyvil had just disappeared.
that impetuous and daring youth had pl
already into the midst of action, befo
cooler headed, though no less brave,
panion had gained a fair view of his
pitate fool-hardy onset.

he spot, at which the conflict had taken
e between the servants and the am-
ed force of the Lorrainers, was a small
w way that made a deep indenture in
side of the long sloping hill, about one
h of the way between the summit
the town; and was so situated that,
ugh it was completely overlooked by
person standing on the brow, it could
e perceived at all by one at the base of
scent; so that, as Marmaduke saw at a
e, there was no fear of any reinforcement
g up from the bridge, unless it should be
l for by some fugitive from the scene of
, and that in this case many minutes
elapse before it could arrive upon the
d. All this he had considered before
ssed the brow of the hill with his men,
at he was completely free, his plan
matured already, to take note of every
the most minute that was occuring,
might tend to the defeat or success
intended exploit.

e smoke and dust, which had obscured

the scene, as he had looked upon it last, had drifted quite away, so that nothing was now hidden from him, which was in the least important for him to know or understand; he could see, therefore, that the firing had not apparently excited any surprise or interest in the guard at the gates; from which he judged that the whole matter had been carefully devised before hand, and the attack made in numbers so overwhelming as must, in the opinion of the plotters, ensure success beyond the possibility of question. And it had been so far successful—for, midway the steep descent, between the summit and the hollow way, lay the horse of the courier, when it had fallen by the first shot, quite dead and motionless; while the man having extricated himself from the carcass, which had fallen on him, sat by the roadside with his head leaning on his hand grievously wounded. Of the two other servants one was stretched beside the chariot-wheel motionless and lifeless, with the sword he had just drawn grasped firmly in his cold

t hand—his fellow leaning against the
cle, and striving fruitlessly to staunch the
d which was welling from his side in
nts—two of the horses which had drawn
carriage had fallen with their postilions
ne volley; and the rest, their traces
ng been cut at the first charge of the
ainers, where in the hands of the rude
rs.

esistance therefore was completely at an
for just as Wyvil cast his eyes upon
scene, he saw a tall and noble-looking
who had sprung sword in hand from
arriage, and done some execution in the
s of his opponents, mastered, disarmed,
bound by some of the ruffians; while
s were engaged in ransacking the car-
, cutting loose the trunks which were
to it, and even tearing out the curtains
ch silk which bedecked its windows.
sight, however, which most inflamed
iery blood of Wyvil, was a tall elegant
ng girl, whom, by the splendour of her
, he could discover, even at that distance,

to be a personage of consequence and rank, struggling madly in the grasp of two or three of the licentious soldiers, who seemed disposed to treat her with indignity and insult.

"Now, my men,"—he exclaimed, as he drew his sword from the scabbard—"Out with your carabines, and, when I bid you halt, pour in your fire—every one pick his man, and see you throw not a shot away—then draw and charge upon the gallop;"—and with the word he dashed away down the steep hill at the top of his horse's speed—Down, they came; down!—all abreast, each with his carbine cocked, and pressed against his side.

"Halt!" and the well-trained chargers stood motionless as marble statues, and the quick firelocks poured forth their streams of glancing fire, Wyvil accompanying the volley with a pistol-shot—and four of the marauders, who, taken somewhat by surprise, were mounting in hot haste, and mustering to meet the onset, fell, either killed outright, or wounded mortally; their startled horses plunging ungovernably through the field, and terribly in-

ing the confusion, as they yerked to and
ith their armed heels, snorting with rage
error.

harge"—shouted Marmaduke, standing
his stirrups, and hurling the long-bar-
pistol, which he had just discharged, full
he face of a subaltern officer, who was
act of lunging at him with his rapier.
rge, and strike home!—down with the
s!"—the ponderous weapon hurtled
gh the air, and full between the eyes,
the peak of his steel morion, smote
orrainer! for an instant he reeled blindly
stirrups, then pitched head foremost to
rth, and lay there, stunned, and to all
rance lifeless, while Wyvil's bay horse,
by the keen spur of his rider, bounded
his prostrate body. One sweep from
right of his long broadsword, and one
stout men, who held the lady, staggered
with a deep gash in his brow, the blood
ning into his eyes, and leaving him blind
e moment and quite senseless. His
were close behind him, and for a little

while it seemed that the bold exploit wa
successful ; so greatly had the suddenness an
vigour of the onset paralyzed and subdue
the courage of the fierce marauders. Bu
when they saw the small force of the part
that had charged and half defeated them a
ready, they rallied, and stood to their arm
stubbornly; the fellows who had been engage
in rifling the baggage, leaping down from th
roof of the carriage, sword in hand, and th
troopers, who were yet mounted, bearin
down in a body on their rash assailants.

A pistol-shot just at this critical time
while Marmaduke was cheering on his men t
a fresh charge, took such effect in his charger
breast, that he stumbled, sank on his knee
and despite all the efforts of the cavalie
rolled over on his side ; at the same instan
a heavy sword-cut fell like a thunder-bo
upon his hat, and, cutting it quite through t
the hair, but turning flatwise in the hand o
him who wielded it, the blade inflicted n
wound, though it had nearly beaten him t
the earth. But, all undaunted, he sprang t

his feet again, and repaid the blow by a straight thrust that staggered his antagonist, although his buff coat saved him from a wound. Still the contest was evidently hopeless; and, though he fought on desperately, striking down trooper after trooper, and, though his servants backed him as if they emulated his example, they were so thoroughly hemmed in, and overdone by odds, and all of them now wounded, that it was but too apparent even to the young soldier, that he had but a choice between death and surrender—when suddenly a clear, high voice, heard above all the din, like the blast of a silver trumpet, struck his ear with notes of joyous tidings — "France! France! St. Denis! Bellechassaigne for France!" and with that farfamed battle-cry, the daring partisan drove into the mêlée, sheathed in impenetrable steel, his horse curvetting and palotading, so that each downright blow fell with redoubled force; three of his men-at-arms cutting their way by dint of mighty prowess after him.

"Stand to it, stand to it, my men!" he shouted, so that the enemy might hear him, "Stand to it, Wyvil, cheerily, help is at hand—strike on! Seguin is close behind with thirteen hundred horse." Already daunted by the fresh charge, the Lorrainers the moment that they heard his words, betook themselves to flight, throwing away their arms, and leaving dead and wounded to the kind mercy of the victors. While to augment their terror and confusion, Bellechassaigne ordered his men who had been forced to charge with their carbines loaded for fear of injuring their friends in the mêlée, to give their fire, and pursue.

"Meantime," he called to Wyvil, "get these good people to horse straightway—the lady must ride too, for we shall be pursued ere we can right the carriage. I go to drive these dogs into the river, and terrify them so far as I can;" and without further parley he drove his spurs into his warhorse, and in a minute was in advance of all his men, hewing down, riding over,

nercilessly trampling underfoot the
ed and disorganised marauders. Wy-
no had been hurt in several places
the timely succour had arrived, and
as beginning to feel faint from the loss
od, gazed round him with a slightly
air, as though he scarcely compre-
what was said to him; but at that
t the aged officer, whose rescue he
hieved so gallantly, came forward to
him, saying, "Your friend is quite
sir—we have no time for any thing,
en for the thanks which you have
nobly; for doubtless they will sally
ne town forthwith. But, good God!"
tinued, seeing the young man stagger
rn very pale, "I fear you are hurt
ly."

! no! not seriously," Marmaduke
ed, instantly, "but I am bleeding fast,
must get these cuts bound up before
t on horseback—and so, I fear, must
oor fellows, who all of them are more
hurt."

"Oh! if that be the worst, we will soon set all that in order. Here, Isabella," and he turned to his daughter, as he spoke, who stood all terrified and trembling in the midst of the carnage, scarce conscious whether she were indeed preserved from outrage; "here, Isabella, see, if you cannot stanch the wounds of this young gentleman, who has gallantly incurred them for your sake. Take my scarf, girl," he added, unbuckling his baldric of white taffeta, and bind his left arm tightly—that is the worst cut, I suspect. Meanwhile, these worthy fellows must look one to another, while I essay to catch the frightened horses, and to prepare a pillion whereon you may ride until we can procure some suitable conveyance."

"We shall do well enough, your honour," replied the man, whom Wyvil had called Adam, and who was hurrying up, having a handkerchief bound tight about his temples, to assist his master. "We none of us be hurt so badly, but what we could ride fifty miles, if it were needed!"

Well said, my hearty fellow," returned
officer in English, for hitherto the whole
versation had been carried on in the
ich language. "We are all English
, I fancy, so we had just as well talk in
mother tongue as in their cursed jargon,
ch is not fit for any thing but their court-
and popinjays. Come hither, quick!
ady will attend your master, better by
than you can—catch yon gray charger
he rein, that plunges there so wildly—
s the best of the lot, and belonged to
officer your master felled so neatly—
as that bay horse which he rode will
y him no more, he must be mounted
best may be for the moment. Cle-
y done! soh! soh! — now, pick that
l up, and take its fellow from the dead
e's holster—they are old friends, I war-
them—so, now he is equipped and
nted. Now, what's thy name, good
v?"

Adam—Sir Henry—Adam Brandon,"

the man answered, "and I know your wo
ship too, Sir Henry, I was not far from yo
at Edgehill, and I saw you—"

"Well, never mind that now," exclaime
the officer; "but lift up that poor fellow th
lies there bleeding by the wheel," pointi
to the servant who had been standi
up, though sadly wounded, when Ma
maduke arrived upon the field. "Is he dea
Adam?"

"Ay, is he, poor lad," answered the se
vitor, letting the body down; "ay, is he
dead as a door-nail."

"Poor fellow!" cried the other, in a thic
husky voice, while a tear twinkled in h
eye. "Poor Lauriston! to fall in such
paltry brawl, after so often—Well, well
we've no time for wailing! So, Anthon
I'm glad to see thee safe," as the third po
tilion, who had escaped, all but some trifli
bruises, extricated himself from the fall
horses; "thou art the only one left whole
six as faithful fellows...."

"No, no, Sir Henry!" the lad interrupted, old Matthew yonder," and he pointed to ne courier, who was now limping down ne hill, "has got off scot free, I be-eve."

"Catch him a horse then, boy, and do as uch for yourself; we must be stirring pre-ntly."

While he had been thus issuing his rders, attending to and talking of a dozen fferent matters, the veteran had arranged a rt of temporary pillion, by means of a ushion from the carriage attached to the ntle and crupper of his demipique by two three silken cords which had festooned the rtains of the vehicle; and now, giving the idle of his own led horse to Brandon, ho was already holding the gray charger hich he had accoutred with Marmaduke's vn war-saddle and housings, he strode up the spot where his fair child, kneeling nong the dead and dying, by the side of r young preserver, was binding up his

wounds with all the tenderness of a sw
gentlewoman, and almost all the skill of
accomplished surgeon.

That was a singular and striking pict
—the evening sun pouring a flood of g
geous light over the bright green foliage
the woodlands, and the yellow sand of
road, which was contrasted fearfully by
broad streaks and puddles of dark gore,
bodies of the men and horses, who l
fallen, all grim, and gashed, and gory; so
dead already and fast growing cold, so
struggling fruitlessly, and groaning in th
great agony, hopeless of any succour fr
the travellers whom they had but now
brutally assaulted, and in the midst of t
wild, ghastly medley, the noble figure a
superb attire of the young cavalier, as
sat on a little knoll by the wayside w
that soft lovely creature, so sedulously
nistering to his need.

For she was, indeed, very lovely.
was not only, that the whole contour

er tall finely-moulded person was exqui-
tely beautiful, combining all the slender
raceful symmetry of girlhood with the
oluptuous roundness of feminine maturity;
was not only, that every feature of her
peaking face was perfect in its classic out-
nes, that all the colouring was rich and
elicate in its harmonious blending, but that
here was an air of inborn nobleness and
worth—an outflashing of intellect and soul
rom the full spiritual eye—a music breath-
ng from every dimple of the smiling mouth
—a character and mind, that could not by
he most casual observer be confounded
vith aught sensual, or common, or ignoble,
ervading every varying expression of her
ineaments—every small movement of her
asy figure.

Yet, beautiful as Isabella Oswald was, her
eauty was by no means of an English
tyle, her hair, which was of extraordinary
ength and volume, was perfectly jet-black,
nd glossy as the raven's wings, without
ne shade of gold or auburn, mingled with

their dark tints, and with the slightest t
dency to wave or curl that can be fanci
and there was something oriental in
mode in which she wore it (a broad
massive braid, plaited in many stra
sweeping down over either cheek, and loo
behind the small and beautifully form
ears), that suited admirably with the
pression of her features, and their r
sunny colouring—for she was a decided,
even dark, brunette, with a clear olive sk
through which the mantling blood show
like the ripe blush on the sunny side
soft peach—black eyes, that flashed at ti
as if they had been fraught with liquid f
and at times melted into that lovely
guor, that is so seldom seen, except
climes far to the southward of her na
land,—and a mouth exquisitely arched,
tinged with the most burning crimson.

It was on such a face and such a fo
that Marmaduke, faint from the loss
blood, and dizzy from the fierce excitem
of the struggle, in which he had been so

y handled, was gazing through his
hut lids, scarce conscious of what had
ened; when, all the arrangements made
heir departure, Sir Henry drew near
e couple.

Iow fare you, sir—how fare you now?"
ked in his hale hearty tone. "Well, I
—well, by this! or, by the Lord that
we shall be taken yet."

hile he was in the act of speaking, the
ing roar of a heavy cannon came
ng down the wind from the direction
town, and instantly the clang of bells,
he deep roll of drums was blent with
larum of the shrill bugles calling the
on to arms.

here is no time to lose—no time!
orse, at once!—to horse, and away
ly!"

d, catching his child by the arm, he
; her to the crupper of his war-horse,
prang himself into the saddle with the
of a young cavalier; while Marma-
rose to his feet, somewhat unsteadily

indeed, and, rallying his disordered senses l
a considerable effort, contrived, by t
assistance of his servants, to mount the gra
which had been furnished with the equi
ments of his fallen charger. Once in t
saddle, he seemed to gain fresh vigou
and looking with a lively and quick
about him, he made some brief inquiri
concerning what had passed during h
faintness, and issued his commands wi
promptitude and spirit.

His servants, who had already bound u
each the other's hurts, as well as time a
their scant means permitted, together wi
the courier and postilion, who alone of S
Henry's train had escaped scatheless, we
all on horse, and ready—their fire-ar
reloaded by Wyvil's order—to start up
their hasty route; and the word was ju
given to advance, when the hard clang
his furious gallop announced the partis
and closely followed by his men-at-arm
Bellechassaigne dashed up to the fugitiv
all blood from plume to stirrup.

"Get on," he cried, even before he
ched them, "get on, with no more tarry-
;—put the hill-top between us and the
vn, and we shall do well yet, which, by
light of heaven, is more than I expected
even hoped for!"

At his words, fancying some urgent peril
se at hand, the little party struck in-
ntly into a hard trot, which, rapidly in-
asing to a gallop, soon carried them be-
d the summit of the slope, and far into
vale beyond it, before Bellechassaigne
ld so far overtake them, as to make him-
distinctly understood. But as they
ched the bottom of the hollow, he
uted, "Halt!" in his sonorous tones
clearly, that all instantly obeyed the
er; and as they did so, he came up,
ghing heartily, and in the highest spi-

"There is no need," he said, "to blow
r horses, or to pound that fair lady to
lly, by riding thus over these hills like

madmen. Those coward dogs have ma
report that all Turenne's light horse
coming down on them; and as I cha
them so far, that I cut down my last man
the *pont levis* as they raised it, and did
fall back till they began firing their ordnan
they have some reason to believe so. Tr
me, they will not send a party out, even
reconnoitre, for an hour to come; and
their march lies not in this direction—
they design to cross the Seine above C
renton—we have but to keep moving st
dily, and, my life on it! we shall hear
thing more of them. So gently, Wyv
gently, my good friend! and as for you,
pretty lady, we will find a horse-litter, o
coach of some kind, wherein you n
journey more softly than on that gr
Bucephalus, ere we have ridden half
hour."

And, reassured by his blunt speech, t
rode deliberately on their way, but with
losing time; and, just as it was grow

k, they reached the hamlet, where they
l halted in the morning, without the
htest interruption.

CHAPTER VII.

It was a small and scattered group
houses only, along the margin of a swi
stream, which turned the wheel of a litt
water-mill, in the midst of which our part
drew their horses up, just as the glorio
summer moon began to show her silver o
above the tree-tops on the hill, although th
richer hues of sunset were still alive amo
the small clouds along the western verge
the horizon—yet, small although it was an
humble, it still afforded a neat comfortab
inn, and more, a village surgeon of skil
sufficient to replace the rude extemporaneo

dressings which had been applied to the hurts of the sufferers, by bandages and ligatures in order, and of sufficient confidence in his own skill to assure all his patients that, within two or three days at the furthest, they would be fit as ever for any martial exercise.

Meanwhile, Bellechassaigne, who had come off entirely unwounded, was all alert, actively seeing the horses fed and properly rubbed down, and looking to the preparation of a vehicle, wherein the lady might accomplish the remainder of her journey more pleasantly than she could do on horseback. The last was not arranged without some difficulty, and when arranged, the two-wheeled curricle, springless, and rough, and built of coarse unpainted timber, presented a wide contrast to the luxurious well-appointed carriage in which she had set out from Coulommiers that morning. Nevertheless, by piling it with soldiers' cloaks and other fleecy textures, procured from the inn, it was at last made tolerably comfortable;

and when two strong, fleet horses had be
harnessed to it tandem fashion, to be driv
from the saddle of Sir Henry's own postilio
it promised to unite the qualities of spe
and safety, in a higher degree than cou
have been expected from its appearance.

These preparations finished, the partis
was summoned by a rosy-cheeked peasa
maiden, to partake of the evening mea
and hastening into the single stone-floor
apartment, which was at once parlour a
kitchen to the rustic inn, he found the boa
spread with a clean though somewhat coa
cloth, on which were laid four covers, a hu
piece of fresh beef, boiled almost to rags,
salad, and a loaf of black-rye bread ;
pewter salt-cellar, a bowl of excellent bu
ter, two or three flasks of ordinary wi
and several tall drinking-glasses, completi
the apparatus of the humble meal, whi
found, however, no fastidious sharers in th
moment of haste and half-apprehended da
ger.

But few words had been spoken, as ma

be well conceived, during the hot ride hitherward; but now there were a thousand questions to be asked and answered, that soon led to a quick and animated conversation, and, so true it is, that one short hour in circumstances of excitement and romantic situation will produce greater intimacy than years of ordinary life, ere half an hour had passed, they were all talking unrestrainedly, as if they had been acquaintances of half a lifetime's standing.

"Well, be that as it may," exclaimed Sir Henry, after the board was cleared and supper ended, in reply to some remarks of the young men deprecating any praises or expressions of high gratitude, "I can assure you that you have done me no small service, inasmuch as I happen to be aware of what you probably know not—that Monsieur de Lorraine, had I been so unlucky as to fall into his hands, would, in all probability, though contrary to all the rules of honourable warfare, have held me as a hostage for the safety of some traitor lord or other, with

whom his eminence of Mazarin has it
contemplation to deal somewhat harsh
So that had you not acted as you did, w
generosity, and skill, and courage, such a
have but seldom seen, the best I could ha
looked for would have been many mon
imprisonment, and the worst, six paces a
a file of musqueteers, or it might be
block and headsman. And so, sir, as I ha
told your friend before," he continued,
dressing Bellechassaigne, who had just ris
from his seat at the table, "it is to you th
I owe my life, and, peradventure, my chil
honour."

"Now by my faith," returned Bellech
saigne, laughing bluntly, "you are m
grievously mistaken. For all that you o
me, is for striving strenuously to divert t
hot-headed countryman of yours from ridi
down to help you; but it seems that he kn
you were expected by his grace of Yo
and fancied, when he saw the housings
your charger, that it was you indeed wh
the Lorrainers was attacking—or what,

ve, is the truth, he had some secret in-
t that so beautiful a lady was in ques-
as mademoiselle here—which I entreat
to believe, Sir Henry, had I known like-
I would have been beside him in his
onset. But, as it is, I do assure you,
you have nothing for which to be grate-
me; unless it be for doing all that with
y to induce this fair youth, who sits so
ly blushing to the roots of his hair, to
off toward Corbeil, and leave you to
fate."

f this be your modesty alone, fair sir,"
posed Isabella, "you carry it indeed to
length, that you would lead us to be-
base things of you, whom we have seen
rm such feats of gallantry and daring.
n Monsieur de Bellechassaigne wishes
believed, in slandering himself, it must
fore those who have not seen him in the
of honour, or profited by his undaunted
ır."

e spoke with a slight degree of excite-
in her tone, and her eyes sparkled as

she did so with generous enthusiastic
ration; and at the same time a rich
when it flashed on her mind that sh
speaking thus unguardedly to one alm
stranger, rushed like a torrent over her
transparent brow.

"Upon my honour! upon the honou
French gentleman and a soldier"—answ
the partisan, in an earnest tone, layi
hand on his heart as he spoke—"Dear
you do me at the same time too little an
much justice. Too little when you
the truth of what I have just said
much when you ascribe the glory o
exploit in the least point to me. I
sure you," he continued, "that I not
did my utmost to dissuade Wyvil fro
sisting you, but absolutely refused to
with him. It was his own deed altog
and you will be disposed to laud it
more than you do at present when I te
that in charging down that hill to you
sistance, he incurred many a danger of w
you know nothing. Had he failed i

ject, and had our party been cut off and
ken—the day that had seen his release
uld have seen likewise his military exe-
ion for disobedience of orders. That is
certain as that the moon is shining now
o yon window."

"How so? how so?" Sir Henry inter-
ted him. "Who is he—and what orders
he disobey? You called him, I think,
a while ago, my countryman—is not he
n a Frenchman? Explain, I pray you.
u I know very well, Sieur de Bellechas-
gne—though by reputation only; for we
e never, I think, met before this day;
who is your companion to whom, by
r account, we owe so much? I fancied
n an officer in your horse regiment, and
wing you, believed him your subordi-
e."

I am indeed your countryman, Sir
nry," returned the cavalier. "Marma-
e Wyvil, late captain in Sir Philip Mus-
ve's horse at Worcester Field — now
ring the same rank in the most Christian

monarch's service, but with a staff appo
ment under his Royal Highness *our* Duke
York!"

"By heaven!" exclaimed the old m
springing to his feet, and grasping the you
officer's hand warmly, "by heaven!
right glad I am to hear it. I honour y
sir, for your loyalty—we must have fou
together on the same side ere this, I fancy
that is, if you bore arms before the mur
of the royal martyr. I thank you for y
ready help—I thank you for your valou
Why, girl,—why Isabella, why sit you th
so shy and silent? Do not you hear—h
your countryman—one of the northe
Wyvils—an officer of our good king; s
now I think of it, you were one of the fi
gallant spirits who held to the king to t
last—ay! after the last too! Where
your tongue, girl, and your hand for yo
preserver?"

It would perhaps have puzzled Isabe
Oswald, quick as she was of intellect, a
bright at repartee, and used to the gr

rld, had she been called on to explain
y she could speak to Bellechassaigne, and
nk *him* for his gallant aid, with eloquent
gue and a frank unembarrassed manner,
king him in the face the while with bright,
blushing eye—and why, when she should
ve performed the same easy duty toward
own countryman, she should have been
barrassed, and confused, and scarcely able
express herself in words at all. She did,
eed, rise from her seat, and stretch her
nd to the young cavalier, but her eyes
re downcast, and all the rich colour had
nished from her cheek, and her whole
me shook visibly as he raised her white
gers, and pressed them to his lips—and as
faltered forth a few words of acknow-
gment, she almost stammered in the
ort ; and then, as raising her deep liquid
es, she met the clear bright glance of
yvil seeming to read her very soul, she
ushed, brow, cheeks, and neck, and bosom,
e deepest and most burning crimson ; turned
le again as death upon the instant ; stag-

gered, and would have fallen, had not the young man started to his feet, and caught her in his arms, when she was relieved, as it seemed, from fainting, only by bursting into a violent and half-convulsive fit of tears and sobbing.

Her father hastening up, Wyvil consigned her to his arms, saying, as he did so,

"It is no wonder—the perils and excitement of the day have been too much for her—we will retire, and leave the servant girl to aid you. I doubt not but a little rest will speedily restore her."

"I trust it *will* be speedily," said Bellechassaigne, with an anxious brow; "for it is time even now we should depart. We were detached to reconnoitre Monsieur de Lorraine's march, and I know that our report is looked for even now; besides, it is too probable the enemy will send out their cravates to scout the country; and if so, you are far too near their quarters to be safe."

"Oh! I shall soon be better," answered the fair girl, mastering her confusion as she

poke. "It was a sudden faintness only hat came over me. Fetch me, I pray you, Cosalie," and she turned to the servant-naid, "an ewer of fresh-water; and by the me our horses are prepared, trust me, I will e ready."

"A noble girl," exclaimed Bellechassaigne, s the door of the kitchen closed behind hem—"a noble girl, and well suited to be soldier's bride; but, in the fiend's name, Wyvil, what did you do to the girl to scare er wits away?"

"Faith! nothing, I, Bellechassaigne," Marmaduke answered, "nor for my life an I conceive what so much overcame er."

"Then most assuredly," replied the Frenchman, "you are one of two things; ither the least observant, or the most mo-est of mankind. By heaven! if I had such fortune, I should not be so long in appre-iending it, nor, *despardieux*, in profiting y it likewise. A pretty fellow you to be o able a proficient in the art of warfare, to

have defended indefensible positions, an carried keeps impregnable, and not to see tha you have sapped, almost without an effor the first defences of a fair lady's heart— make you but two or three assaults in quic succession, and my life on it, when you ca a parley, she will beat her *chamade* straigh way, and offer you a *carte blanche* in th bargain!"

"Tush, tush!" said Wyvil, with a smil that denoted how much the jest of his con rade had gratified his self-complacenc "the thing's impossible, Bellechassaigne — why she has hardly heard me speak, scarc even knows my name."

"I crave your pardon, beau sire," th soldier answered mockingly—"I knew no heretofore that it was with men's names fa ladies fell in love; but you are doubtless greater adept in these things than I. Bu jesting apart, Wyvil, she is a most ra beauty—that deep, wild, languid eye—tha superb hair—that figure so magnificentl rounded. By my soul! I can scarce believ

that she is one of your cold half-animated countrywomen—this creature of ethereality and fire—she seems to me some passionate, romantic Madrilena, or houri of old Mahomet's elysium—well worth the turning Musulman to win, even beyond the grave. Are you not overhead in love with her already? You, too, who have but to thrust out your hand and grasp her—"

"Nonsense," repeated Wyvil, "nonsense, Bellechassaigne. Our English ladies are not so easy, I assure you, to throw themselves into the arms of the first gentleman that does them a slight service."

"Slight service! by my soul, if you call it slight service to charge a score and a half of well-armed troopers, with four ordinary retainers, I should like well to know what you call heavy! Slight service! by the Lord, if I had done my duty, and ridden back to Corbeil, as I ought, with my intelligence, I trow you would have found the consequences any thing but slight, let the

service be what it might. As for the re
I dare say that she is a trifle prudish; mo
of your pretty islanders are so—but wh
then? it were a poor game at which v
should win ever, without check or hi
drance. Now look you, if you mean not
push your conquest, just say so, and I'll f
my hawk at this fair quarry."

"Oh, fly it when you will, Bellecha
saigne; I have no thought, I do assure yo
of adventuring, though she is, as you sa
very beautiful; nor for that matter, if I ha
would it avail me any thing I fancy; so f
at least, as aught has yet occurred to a
me. But we had better make our mo
bring out the horses; we shall have sha
work yet to join the army before daybrea
I doubt not the fair Isabella has rallied h
composure before this."

And almost as he spoke the words,
servant followed them out from the in
toward the stable-yard, whither they ha
turned at the suggestion, and told them th

ıe lady and Sir Henry were quite prepared
) set forth on the route, so soon as all
ıould be made ready."

"Sound them to horse!" Bellechassaigne
ied. "To horse—to horse!—it is nine by
e night already; and we have leagues to
le ere daybreak."

The bugle instantly sent forth its long
ear summons, waking a thousand echoes
rough the still evening; and with its first
te the ready soldiery came forth, leading
eir chargers orderly and mounted, and
l in; while Wyvil and Bellechassaigne
led the lady to ascend her rude convey-
ce, and then sprung to their saddles.

"Pardon me, gentle lady," said the
enchman, bowing as he spoke, till his tall
ıme was almost blended with the tresses of
charger's mane; "pardon me, that I use
rude a word as *must;* but we must
vel fast to-night—as fast, in fact, as our
eds will carry us. Sir Henry will accom-
ıy your carriage with his chasseur;
ile Captain Wyvil with his servants

will scour the road in front, and clear
obstacles away; and I, with my
troopers, as the best armed, will follow
the rear and cover you. Only remem
this, and now I speak to *you*, good comr
mine, should you hear any noise or tur
in the rear, ride on as best you may,
bear our tidings to the marechal—
attempt to aid me, would destroy not yo
self alone, but the whole army—the wh
cause, indeed, of the king! and so G
speed ye, and set on!"

The eyes of Marmaduke turned half
luctantly to the fair face of Isabella Osw
lighted up as it was by the bright lustr
the summer moon, and caught a sidel
glance from hers, which were, however,
stantly averted; and, for a moment, he
peared to hesitate; but before any one co
comment on his seeming indecision, he
bowed low, and turning his horse's h
down the road, led the way, followed
his servants, at a swift, regular hand gall
All night they rode at a sharp steady pa

using twice only to breathe their horses,
some lone well-head, or clear streamlet,
aring from time to time the rumbling
nd of the rude calash, which bore the
y, far behind them; but never halting
long as to suffer it to overtake them.

They met no opposition in their route—
fact no human being, whether friend or
crossed their path as they hurried on-
rd; and, save a stray wolf from the
ghbouring forest of Senârs, no living
ature; until, just as the moon was set-
, a sentinel by the wayside levelled his
uebuse, and called on them to stand, and
e the countersign.

Turenne—Turenne!" shouted Wyvil,
, clashing on, scarce stopping to return
deep salute of the fantassin, entered the
ets of Corbeil, and halted in the market-
e amid the earliest crowing of the
kened cocks.

Wild thoughts had flitted through the
n of Wyvil during that hurried ride—
l, whirling, passionate fancies. Hard

would it indeed be to shadow forth t
thick tumultuous images, which rushed
like an entering tide, and filled his wh
mind for a space, and were in turn displac
by a fresh sweep of conflicting feelings;
it assuredly would have been beyond
power himself to account for or expl
them.

The past, the present, the future—gr
tude, honour, love — sudden and alm
overwhelming passion — ambition, avar
and, above all, the lust of power—were
at once awakened, all at once fierc
striving in his bosom. The words of Be
chassaigne had, like the puissant sp
of a magician, called forth a host of
mons, that would not now be laid to
by any effort of the mind which they
mented.

A passionate admirer of all female lo
liness, Wyvil had been much struck at f
sight by the extreme beauty of Isab
Oswald; and there was something in
romantic nature of the accident which

ıt them acquainted, in the close con-
ıto which they had been thrown,
ıhe dressed the wounds incurred for
ıe, in the mixture of sudden fami-
with conscious bashfulness, that added
o the effect of her charms on the
f Marmaduke.

ıt was, indeed, but his fancy that had
uched, and that very slightly, when
chance words of the partisan a far
angerous and subtle element of his
ion was startled into action. Wyvil's
g weakness—for in him, though it
d to good, oftener perhaps than to
was a crying weakness—was vanity.
nity of being first in all things—
not ambition!—though casual ob-
would designate it, though he him-
ld fain have palliated it to himself,
gnified it by the title of that far
ınd more potent passion. It is true
led often to the same results in
to which ambition would have led a
sterner nature. But he had nothing

of the Cato in his mood—he never would h
chosen rather the *esse, quam videri, bonu*
his leading object, his first aim, was eve
shine prominent, to be the present wor
filling the mouths of men—to be *held* br
or eloquent, or fortunate, even though
himself knew the falsehood of the wo
opinion.

This was indeed the one great flaw
Wyvil's character; and though it was a
ciated with many a high and noble qua
—though he had that fine sense of in
honour, that he would have spurned in
nantly from his soul the mere suggestio
aught base or sordid—though he was br
even to headlong rashness—though his h
was kind and good and full of noble
pulses and holy aspirations—though his h
was in other respects strong, clear, and c
ble of judgment—yet this one failing w
far, like an alloy of copper with fine g
to corrupt and debase and render nugat
those admirable sterling qualities, of wh
he was undoubtedly the master.

And now, although he certainly loved Alice Selby with all the strength and truth of which his wild and somewhat vacillating character was capable—although he would have scorned and loathed himself, if he could at that time even momentarily have contemplated the desertion of her to whom he owed so much—although he would have spat upon the man who would have counselled him to do her any wrong—although, above all, he cared not even in his fancy, beyond the moment's passing admiration, for Isabella Oswald—Bellechassaigne's words had wrought upon that solitary weakness, and kindled it into quick action.

A bright triumphant vision of winning that high beauty, for whom, as fame had bruited it abroad already, half the gallants of Paris were vainly sighing—of being signalized through the gay court of France as the conqueror of that impregnable and cruel heart—of being the possessor of the most brilliant bride in all that land of beauty—of riding as it were unchallenged, unre-

sisted, and at a *coup-de-main*, into th stronghold of that cold and haughty maid affections—flashed vivid and impetuous a the lightning across the mirror of his fancy

True! it was instantly driven out, di carded, by a strong impulse of the bette nature which was yet strong within him— true! it was with a sense of shame an self-reproach, that he became conscious o the instant that his heart had swerved fo a second's space from its fealty to swee Alice Selby. True! it was some time er the purer feeling lost its power, ere memor —the memory of the calm pure affection of that fair gentle girl, of her heroic sel devotion, of her deep fervent feminine love faded from his mind—but no less true! *did* fade. It did fade, and the more da zling charms of the superb court beaut replaced the image of the country maiden.

Again indignant conscience rallied i forces, but it was only by a stronger effo than before—only by summoning his sens of gratitude, his sense of honour, to his aid

hat his heart once again was won back to
ts allegiance. And so, throughout that
ong and hasty ride, his mind could only
e likened to a confused and whirling battle-
ield, where the fierce hosts of the tumul-
uous and fiery passions were mustering fast
nd thick to the attack of principle and
irtue; and when repulsed time after time,
anding anew their scattered legions, and
ummoning at each fresh charge fresh and
nore foul allies to aid in their fell onslaught.

Such conflicts are, alas! but of too fre-
uent and familiar occurrence to create any
hing of wonder or even much of interest
n the mind of every-day observers—but it
s from them only that the keen judge of
uman nature derives his intimate acquaint-
nce with the individual heart of man, with
he general heart of the world—it is from
deep and continual study of them only,
hat we can learn the sage's hardest and
ast lesson—"the knowledge of ourselves."

The minds of all—the best of us no less
han the worst, are subject to these rude
ssaults—these violent temptations!—the

minds of all, even the best, at times succumb to the assault!—the minds of all, even the worst, at times resist their tempters! But it must be observed that in the species of resistance there is a broad distinction—there is a steady, resolute, and organized resistance, the consequence of the exertion of thoughts influenced by principle—a resistance, which, when it has repulsed the first attack of its insidious foes, though possibly it may relax from its first vigour, and so be liable to surprise, is nothing weakened in itself, but can at any moment rally and drive back its assailants which from their very nature are more disorganized, and scattered at every subsequent repulse, until they in the end become entirely weak, and frustrate, and powerless for evil.

There is again a quick and fiery, though unstable and irresolute resistance—the child of a mind acting ever upon impulse—which though it may beat back the first onslaught of evil passions, nevertheless retains a recollection of the strife, receives

it were an impression from the shock; d, when again attacked in the same akened point of its position, though it ain comes off victorious, is still so much eebled by its own irregular and impul- e opposition, that each succeeding victory t renders it the less unable to resist; but s the daring of its enemy, until, its whole ences sapped, the heart of its lines car- d, it yields at last ignobly, and surrenders, it were, at discretion to foes, who foiled en, have gathered strength and purpose, s from their innate qualities than from defects of the system that pretended to front them.

Such, during all that night, had been state of Wyvil's mind, harassed and tated by a continual occurrence of oughts and half-formed wishes which, ile he felt them to be evil, and exerted nself from time to time to beat back and nish them, he yet lacked the steady energy will to repress utterly, and crush them, it were, in the bud. The consequence of s with him, as it must naturally be in

every case, was, that the mind became h
bituated by constant repetition to sugge
tions from which at first it shrunk abhorren
and that, although he would not have a
mitted it, he became half-familiarized wit
the idea of forsaking Alice Selby, even b
fore he had in reality at all contemplate
doing so.

He was in some sort then bewildered sti
and confused in mind, when he halted h
party a little while before daybreak, in th
market-place, ignorant what to do, o
whither to direct his course, until Bellecha
saigne should come up; for he had neve
been in Corbeil before, except to pa
through it at a trot on his outward marc
the previous morning. He had not bee
there, however, many minutes, before h
found himself surrounded by a dozen o
more of privates and non-commissione
officers belonging to a regiment of roya
horse, which had been quartered there som
time in order to command the passage o
the Seine, and to insure the advance or re
treat of the king's army. From these h

had already learned that good accommodations could be obtained at an inn in the *Rue Royale*, known as the *Lion d' Or*, when the rude vehicle came up creaking and groaning over the rugged pavement, escorted by the daring partisan and his bold troopers; so that as soon as they came into sight, he merely waved his hand to them to follow, and led the way to the great gates of the inn-yard, where he was standing, when they overtook him, thundering with his dagger's hilt upon the oaken portals, though seemingly with no effect, except to wake a thousand echoes through the deserted streets, and to excite the furious baying of one or two gaunt half-starved mastiffs, which were chained within the courtyard.

On the arrival of Bellechassaigne, however, all this was speedily corrected; for at his order the bugler of his party set up so loud and long a call of his shrill instrument, that half a dozen casements were speedily thrown open in as many different houses, and sundry male and female heads, clad in

strange night-gear, suddenly protruded t
learn the cause of the disturbance. A mo
ment afterward, a shuffling step was hear
within the gates, and after reconnoitring th
company for half a minute through th
grille, despite the oaths and objurgations c
the angry soldier, the slip-shod hostler un
barred the leaves, yawning and rubbing hi
half-opened eyes, and ushered them into th
basscourt, of what had been, at some tim
before it was degraded into a house of pub
lic entertainment, the mansion of some ric
proprietor. Here they were met by th
portly landlord, profuse, though scarce awak
of promises of entertainment, and apologi
for their detention; and here, having assure
their fair charge that she was in absolut
security, Corbeil being in possession of
strong royal garrison, the young men too
their leave, amid the unfeigned thanks an
warm acknowledgments no less of Sir Henr
than of the lady.

"Rest, sure, Sir Henry Oswald," were th
last words of Bellechassaigne, "that yo

vill advance yourself nothing by moving
ny further on this route, even when the
ay breaks. The army, I am certain, is on the
oute already hitherward; and as the tidings
hich I carry will only expedite their pro-
ress, you may depend on seeing the ma-
echal *here* before this day is six hours
lder. If, then, you will be ruled by my
oor counsel, you will remain here till the
ost comes up, and obtain such repose as the
tigues and apprehensions of this fair lady
ust render indispensable."

"I will, sir," cried Sir Henry; "I will—
nd that right willingly; and now I will
ot bid you tarry, as knowing that the first
uty of a soldier, is prompt execution of his
rders; and, trust me, you shall lose nothing
ith Monsieur Turenne for your service.
nd now, farewell, for a short space, seeing
e shall soon meet again."

And then—their parting salutations made
n both sides—the cavaliers rode off as hard
s they could gallop, Bellechassaigne calling
ut to Wyvil with a light laugh.

"*Despardieux!* but I am not half s
certain, as the good English chevalie
that our service shall seem so good to th
marêchal, as he deems it. Seeing it wa
his aim to surprise the Duke of Lorraine—
it may well be that he will scarce thank u
for beating up his quarters, and telling hi
as plain as we could speak, that all th
army—which I'll be sworn he fancied
Etampes—was on this side the Seine—
should not be surprised, for my part, if w
were both ordered into arrest directly; an
if it take that turn, our lives will just d
pend on the good or bad generalship of th
Lorrainers."

"I see not that, however," answered th
Englishman, spurring his horse sharply
he spoke, to keep up with his volatile com
panion. "What the devil has the duke
generalship to do with it?"

"You are less apprehensive than you
wont then," replied the partisan. "See yo
here—you know well that Condé has bee
building, these two weeks, a bridge

boats, a little way above Charenton, whereby he of Lorraine may pass the Seine, and join the army of the Princes. Now, seeing that the duke heard of our onslaught last night before sunset, and must be sure from that of Turenne's movement to cut him off from Paris, if he have acted with the smallest judgment, he is before this time at Charenton; and before we have crossed the river, here at Corbeil to the eastward, will have made good his passage to the westward, and broken up his bridge, and joined the princes at his leisure. That, as you know, will utterly foil all our plans for the campaign; will leave us in the face of a superior force; will probably completely ruin the king's cause; and—what concerns us most of all—will be the consequence of our misconduct, and will afford a very pretty pretext for treating each of us to a file of musqueteers, and a volley at twelve paces. So, now you begin, I suppose, to apprehend how far it concerns *us* whether the Duke of Lorraine be a good general or a bad one!"

"You take it coolly enough, notwi
standing," exclaimed Wyvil, not altogetl
liking his companion's mode of putting t
case.

"Of course I do—of course I do," s
swered the other, laughing, "why shoul
not, pray? You would think it very odd
I were *not* cool in contemplating the res
of a volley from five or six hundred Sp
niards or Lorrainers, and I have yet
learn that a score or two of Spanish bull
do less harm than a dozen French or
Tush, man, our business is to die when
are wanted—and what odds does it ma
whether it comes by a platoon in battle,
by a file in execution? There is this in
notwithstanding, that the faster we ri
the less the chance of being shot by Fren
men, and the more by the Lorrainers.
if you, as you seem to do, prefer these l
so much, you were best spur that gr
brute somewhat sharply. Don't let h
tumble on his head though," he continu
as the horse, urged beyond his speed, ma
a bad stumble on the stony road.

Vell saved! well saved! you English
de well, that must be granted; and,
ere is the Seine and the bridge, and
comes the sun above the tree-tops.
! Hark! By heaven, there go the
pets; and see, see there, how the dust
s up beyond the hill; we soon shall
the worst of it!"

nd galloping violently on, they soon
untered the advanced horse of the royal
, and in less than an hour were busily
oyed in threading their way through
dense columns of the centre, now in
narch upon Corbeil, in search of their
wned commander.

CHAPTER VIII.

A COMFORTABLE chamber, supplied pro
fusely with all the luxuries and appliances
which an *auberge* of that day, and in that
country, could be expected to supply, the
chief of which was a convenient and well
curtained bed, soon brought forgetfulness of
all her terrors and fatigues to Isabella
Oswald; yet, ere she sank into absolute
sleep, she could not but think much and
deeply on the occurrences of the past day—
of the great perils she had run—of the en
thusiastic daring valour of her young coun
tryman, excited—almost in despite of hop

for her protection. Nor is it strange that she should have thought of it deeply, for at all times, and in all countries, there is perhaps no quality of man which strikes at first so strongly the imagination of a weaker sex, as gallantry and fiery courage. At that day, too, when the sword was the surest—almost, indeed, the *only* instrument whereby to clear the path of honour; when the spirit of chivalry was yet alive, and burning in every noble breast of man or woman, a high and perilous emprize was sure to win the admiration and regard of all for the successful gallant. To this, in Isabella's case, was added a romantic sense of gratitude, a feeling that this bold deed had been wrought for her sake alone, and that as the exciting cause of a chivalric exploit, she, too, must be a sharer in the glories of the actor.

It must not be forgotten either, that Wyvil, both in form and feature, might be esteemed a model of masculine and vigorous beauty,—that his attire was rich and splen-

did, and bore sure witness to the ex
taste of the wearer,—that his air a
meanor were unusually high and n
easy at the same time, and dignified;
ful and polished as the bearing of th
courtly Frenchman, yet tinctured
strain of frankness, and largely fraugh
a sort of proud humility that she had
yet observed in any of her lighter an
volatile adorers. What wonder, the
she should ponder long and thoughtfu
fore she sunk to rest, and that the t
of her defender should have been bl
after her eyes were closed in slumbe
the disturbed and whirling visions,
rising naturally from the occurrences
past day, floated a wild phantasm
through her half-conscious brain.

Isabella Oswald was not indeed a
ordinary qualities, or everyday cha
but born with the perilous dower of u
mon genius, coupled, as it almost inva
is, with a quick sensitive temperament
powerful affections and strong passion

ad, unfortunately for herself, been educated
o—if that can be called education which
n no respect even aimed at correcting the
efects of nature—as to exaggerate rather
nan diminish the extravagances of her
ative character. Her mother, a Spanish
dy of great wealth, and the highest rank,
hom Sir Henry had married at the time
hen an alliance with the infanta had been
ontemplated by the unhappy prince, who
ad since expiated his faults and follies on
ne scaffold, died in her daughter's early
hildhood; and, from that period, the young
abella had scarce a guide beyond her own
ild inclinations. Her father, who in his
outh had been one of the chosen councillors
nd courtiers of the First Charles, with a
rescience of events which it had been well
r his hapless master to possess, leaned early
o the moderate councils of Hyde and Falk-
nd, and those wiser spirits, whose pru-
ence, had it been listened to by the mis-
uided monarch, would have spared Eng-
nd years of bloodshed; and, soon foresee-

ing that the neglect of these would le
fatal consequences, had remitted the
fortune of his lost bride, and not that
but the price of all such portions of his
patrimony as he could alienate, to F
where he concluded a safe asylum wo
any time be open to the servants
crown.

It so fell out, however, that long bef
contemplated any instant peril, he was
fied, by circumstances, to judge of the
dom of these measures; for, where
had looked forward to exile, as to the
sequence of adhering to the fortunes
royal master in opposition to the rebe
and fanatical will of the people, he
doomed to experience first, coldness
neglect, then persecution—from whic
was but too happy to escape by fligh
the hands of that very king, whom he
ready to support, through right and w
with indiscriminating loyalty.

Restless and active, both in mind
body, he had scarce entered France,

e plunged deeply into the intrigues which ere harassing the vitals of that kingdom; and dopting the court party, from the natural ias of his mind, had risen speedily to emi- ence; had distinguished himself greatly oth in the council and the field; had been dvanced to a high station in the army; nd occupied a situation as prominent as ould be held by any foreigner in the great ation.

This, and the circumstances, no less than han the character, of the man—his want of omestic ties or attractions—his fiery and eadlong appetite for all and every kind of ild excitement—his constant absence from ome, in the field or at the court,—contri- uted to deprive his child of the advantages f any solid supervision or home-govern- nent.

Living, as it were, alone, and mistress, hen she was yet but a child, of her father's rand hotel in the fauxbourgs, with car- iages and horses and attendants at her ommand, and the old gouvernante, who

nominally ruled her, in truth the most
quious of her servants, it was not won
that Isabella Oswald should have gro
a wild, untamed, high-spirited girl, wi
guide for her actions but her own
impulses and active sensibilities, with
power of self-government, and stil
mental discipline; but it was somewh
be admired that she did not become a
wilful and capricious beauty, reckles
violent, and headstrong, the slave o
own passions, and the tormentor of all
should be thrown into the sphere of h
tractions.

From this her natural genius, and
tain resolute strength of mind, whic
inherited from her mother, had ha
preserved her. An eager, passionate
tion, which was perhaps not the
striking feature of her mind, coupled
insatiable thirst of knowledge, had
her from frivolity; and, while she wou
bear the least dictation in matters th
lated to demeanor, to all the masters

om she could derive instruction, she
lded an implicit and unquestioning obe-
ıce, that in itself assured advancement
success.

Thus, at an early age, she had not only
stered all the accomplishments which
e esteemed in that day requisite to
es, but many which were rare even
ng men, except those who were destined
he learned professions. An enthusiastic
complete musician; a dancer—second
ıone in that land, which then as now,
the great theatre and school of that
science; she was, moreover, a linguist
o mean capacity—speaking and writing
French, and Spanish, and Italian tongues
fluently as her own native English.
was this all; for she had dipped some-
t deeply into the wells of ancient lore,
that she was far better qualified
most men of the day, to converse with
great and learned on great and interest-
topics.

his course of reading, it is true, had

strengthened the powers of a mind naturally strong—had filled the storehouses of her brain with manifold and valuable knowledge—had perfected her taste, matured her judgment, and developed all her natural gifts in an unusual degree; but, in affecting this, it had produced other and far less favourable consequences—if it had strengthened the powers of her mind, it had in no less degree strengthened her confidence in them—if it had perfected her tastes, it had increased her desire of consulting them alone—if it had amplified her judgment, so it had led her to respect no opinions, that tallied not with her own sense of what was right and proper. It had, in short, contributed to foster in no small degree the independence of a spirit already, perhaps, too independent; so that, even in her fifteenth year, Isabella Oswald, with more than all a woman's talents and accomplishments, possessed a degree of energy and decision, that was sure to make her a singular and distinguished, though it was highly questionable

whether it was like to make her a happy or contented, woman.

It seemed, indeed, that there was something not far removed from a direct destiny—if such a thing could be—in the events which had in a manner created the character of the young beauty; exactly at that critical age when she was budding into womanhood, and when, from her increasing years, she was becoming a companion to her father; who, had he fallen into more domestic habits, as he was, indeed, gradually doing, could not have failed to notice, or noticing to counteract, the undue tendency of her young mind to form decided judgments, to act upon the impulse of the moment, to consult its own opinions only, and to do many things which could not be deemed other than unfemininely and unduly independent.

Just at that critical period, the war broke out in England between the king and his parliament; and true to his chivalric sense of loyalty, Sir Henry, overlooking the wrongs done to him by the

man, in sympathy with the misfortune
the sovereign, left his asylum, took up a
for the crown, and trusting his child to
doubtful guardianship of an old marqu
of the *vielle noblesse*, who, to complete
mischief, was something of an *esprit*
herself, fought to the very last, even
Astley's fatal overthrow at Stow-on-t
Wold, with a determined valour, that had
cause for which he bled succeeded, wo
have placed him among the first men of
nation. As it was, he who had been
the first banished by the king, was n
proscribed by the parliament; and o
again escaping to his old asylum, found
daughter, whom he had left a bright,
cocious child, grown up into a dazzl
woman, captivating all around her by
rare gifts and striking qualities; but form
completely, and matured in charac
already almost beyond the possibility
changing whether for good or evil.

Such had been the early history,
such were the habits of the beautiful g

for whom Wyvil had, unhappily for all parties, performed the brilliant and successful exploit, which had at once so powerfully wrought upon a fancy, the natural tendency of which was strongly sensible to any thing romantic or poetical, that it had paved the way for warmer and more passionate sentiments, should the least circumstance occur in future to call them into action. That she was deeply interested in the young handsome cavalier, who had so daringly encountered peril in her cause, cannot be doubted; and, as she fell asleep on that eventful morning, it is quite certain that the last tangible thought of her mind was upon Marmaduke.

Quite overdone by exertion, and fatigue, and terror, she slept long and soundly; and although many a strange and startling sound rose from the streets below her window, and that too before she had been long asleep—though squadrón after squadron of the king's cavalry passed at a rapid trot, clanging and clattering with their iron har-

ness, over the rough stone paveme
though the loud shouts of the people,
into loyalty by their imposing nu
greeted the royal troops with stunning
mation, and were responded to by
drum and trumpet—though a field-b
of ponderous guns with their caisson
tumbrils groaned, creaked, and lun
through the street;—she did not sti
her heavy sleep, until the sun was a
high in heaven, and all the vangu
the army had well-nigh reached th
lage where she had supped on the pre
evening.

Just as she woke, however, and
far collected her ideas as to be
where she was, a prolonged flourish
a distant band of music called her att
and, conjecturing at once that the
must announce the army of Turenn
dressed herself in haste, and hurried
window, just as a column of arquel
marching extremely fast, shoulder to
der, in the closest order, began to f

eet from side to side. In a few minutes
se had passed, and were succeeded by six
Scotch and Irish regiments, under the
al standard of King Charles of England,
l in the uniform and officered by cava-
s of their own country. Monsieur de
ailles, whom Isabella well knew, fol-
ed with a detachment of the French
seguards, whose trumpets she had heard
n a distance; and then, surrounded each
his proper staff and many a mounted
er beside, the Marêchals Turenne and
Hocquincourt rode by, in deep and
nest conversation.

ut it was not to these great men, nor
he gallants who swept by, glittering in
geous arms and fluttering with scarfs
favours, though many of them were
uaintances—nay, friends and suitors!—
the eyes of the fair Isabella were
cted, though with an earnest and in-
ing glance she ran her eyes over the
ndid concourse as if in search for some-
g which she found not.

After the leaders of the army had passed out of sight, there was a little break, as it were, or interval in the line of march; and then a squadron of well-mounted cavaliers, led by a tall and noble-looking man, whom she recognised as the Earl of Bristol, came up at a hand-gallop, as if endeavouring to make up the ground which they had lost.

While these were yet even beneath her windows, the drums and fifes of another Irish regiment, playing one of their wild, heart-stirring melodies, swept cheerily down the wind; and, almost keeping up with the gallop of the English horse, the splendid files of the Duke of York's own regiment, came dashing through the dust, trailing their pikes, at the long, swinging trot, peculiar to the natives of green Erin. What was there in the sight of that wild regiment, that so excited the bright girl who gazed upon them? Her colour came and went, her heart beat almost audibly, her small hands trembled so, that they scarcely could

pport her as she leaned far out of the sement to survey them. They did afford gay and even spirit-stirring sight, those ral islanders! The lythe and stalwart nbs, bearing them, free as the deer on eir own pathless mountains, at a pace no s different from the trained march of the re drilled mercenary, than is the gallop the desert steed from the procession ble of my lady's palfrey — the merry wk-like glance of their blue laughing es—the hair that floated in loose tresses the wind—the reckless jest, the soul-ught merriment, which rang in every e, which breathed from every feature— wild, clear shout of *faugh a ballah*, ich every now and then rose shrilly n the heads of the column, as they sed on the track of the cavalry—combin- to make up a picture the very opposite ll respects of the stiff rigid martialists hat age of stern and iron discipline.

t was not this, however, that stirred the rt of Isabella with a strange sense, she

knew not what, of mingled hope and apprehension. She had not failed to note in the few words that Bellechassaigne let fall, that there was some reason for dreading evil consequences from the slight breach of orders—slight in her opinion, and venial, if not praiseworthy—of which both had been guilty in attacking the Lorrainers — and having heard from Marmaduke's own lips, that he held an appointment on the staff of the English duke, her whole soul was in terrible suspense to see if he was in his place beside his princely master.

The last rank of the Royal Irish passed, and immediately behind them, mounted upon a Polish carriage-horse, dun-coloured, with a long white main and tail, a young man, richly dressed in a suit of dark brown velvet, cut in the fashion, which has derived its modern name from the great Flemish painter, with russet-leather buskins, and a superb cravat of Valenciennes lace, cantered lightly on. He wore no armour, nor even weapons, except an ordinary rapier

anging from an embroidered scarf; but in is hand he held a leading-staff, or trun-heon, and round his neck he bore a glit-ering chain with the effigy of St. George, nd on the left breast of his mantle, the iamond star of the garter. He was above ie middle height, graceful and slender in is person, and he rode easily and well, ith a firm seat, and a delicate light hand; ut although very young at that time, the arkness of his complexion, his heavy eye-rows, and the hard and deeply cut lines f his rigid and inflexible lineaments, caused im to appear many years advanced beyond is real age—an impression which was in o degree diminished by the harsh periwig f coarse black hair, which he wore under is low-crowned, feathered hat, falling quite own upon his shoulders.

Yet, though he was decidedly ill-favoured nd harsh-featured, no person at that time ould have failed to see that he was a man f consequence and character to match his gnity. There was a quickness in his

clear dark eye, that spoke intelligence, and spirit, and high daring; there was a firm and resolute curve in the muscles of the close set mouth, that promised an unflinching steadiness of purpose.

Such was the Duke of York, as he was in the days of adversity; the steady and right councillor of his more vacillating brother—such was the Duke of York, when he fought side by side with Turenne — such, when he gave the promise, afterward well fulfilled by skill and conduct, and unquestioned valour, displayed as lord high admiral, against De Ruyter and the Dutch; ere power and priestcraft had debased his every quality of mind, until the conqueror of Opdam sank into the weak driveller and coward of the Boyne.

A pace or two behind the duke, but still so near that they could easily converse with him, were three or four English gentlemen, among whom Isabella recognised the Earl of Berkeley, and Colonel Worden, his gentleman of the bedchamber; but there was

ot one in his suite whose port or air in ny wise resembled the gallant Wyvil; wo or three grooms and equerries fol-owed, one leading the duke's battle-horse, nd the others, bearing dispersed among heir number, the various pieces of his ar-nour.

The fair girl's heart sank as they vanished om her sight, and were succeeded by the ear-guard of the army, composed of the re-iments of Picardy, Richelieu, Uxelles, Ca-ignan, Burgundy, and of a strong detach-ent of the French guard, closing the long ne of the march.

Heart-sick and faint, she drooped into a eat, and letting fall her head upon the win-low-sill, buried it in her hands in sad and nxious meditation, until after a long and lent pause, the groaning crash of heavy aggons again excited her attention. It was he baggage of the host—artillery carts, and uge wains piled up with chests of arms nd clothing, and mules laden with tents, nd foragers, and sutlers, and abandoned

women, and all the base and worthl
ble that ever follow in the train o
and armies. A dozen light pieces
lery, and small body of musqueteers,
panied, or rather brought up the
this disorderly multitude; and she b
reassure herself in the idea, that now
all had passed by, and that the cav
was in fact quite true—had prece
main body of the troops.

As soon as this idea took hold
mind, her sanguine fearless temp
caused her at once to assume it for
and having scarcely a minute befo
quite depressed by the imagination t
deliverers were suffering disgrace, a
haps danger, she now amused her mi
many a gay visionary dream, ho
might have been promoted for th
lantry, and sent on with the foremos
the perilous post of honour. Already
and for the moment happy, she had
to the mirror which graced the anti
let-table, and was arranging her

ent tresses, humming a gay Provençal bal-
ad as she did so, when she was once more
ummoned from her employment to the win-
ow, by the trampling of horses. She
rned, it is true, to look at what was pass-
g, but it was with a listless air of uncon-
ern, that was as different as possible from
e excited restless agitation with which she
ad watched every separate company as it
vept onward, before she hit upon the
ought which now possessed her. A single
ance, however, sufficed to change her air
unconcern for one of the deepest and
ost agonizing interest. Every drop of
ood rushed back from her cheeks, and left
r pale as ashes—she clasped her hands,
d wrung them bitterly, and one faint
riek burst from her lips, and even reached
e ears of those whose situation caused it.
The horsemen, whose march had attracted
r, were a small party, fully armed, and led
an officer, who rode at a foot's pace, with
sword drawn, at their head; six troopers,
ee and three, came after him, all with

their carbines ready, the buts resting on their thighs, and their matches lighted; two more, with drawn swords, followed, and between them, his horse's reins linked in the bits of their chargers, and the sheath of his rapier empty, Marmaduke Wyvil! Six troopers more succeeded, like the first, with their matchlocks in their hands; and then, guarded like Wyvil by two soldiers, but with a gay and scornful smile on his dark features, the brave Bellechassaigne! A dozen dragoons more, and another subaltern, completed the sad escort.

The face of Marmaduke was perfectly composed and calm, though somewhat paler than its wont, until the shriek of Isabella falling upon his ear, he raised his eyes, and met her wild and careworn glance, and noted the strange paleness that had supplanted her rich warm complexion—then a quick burning flush covered his face with crimson, as, answering her passionate look of inquiry with a deep meaning glance and a bright half-triumphant smile, he doffed his plumed

hat, and bowed low, laying his hand upon his heart as he did so. Bellechassaigne caught likewise the faint accents of the lady's cry, and he, too, smiled and bowed; but there was nothing but high daring, mixed with a touch of scorn in the expression of his face; and as he bowed, he raised his voice, and called aloud,

"Fear not, dear lady—fear not at all for us—this is a matter of mere form, believe me, we are in no danger!"

She heard, it is true, what he said, and waved her hands mechanically in reply; but her mind scarcely comprehended the sense of the words, and even if it had done so, the grave involuntary shake of the head with which the officer, who had them in charge, received the speech, would have entirely counteracted their effect. She watched them for a moment or two, and observed that they took not the route of the army, but turned off toward the castle, which she had seen on the right-hand as she drove into

the town that morning ; and then, as
passed round the corner of the street, r
out into the antechamber, calling in
that were almost a shriek, upon her fa

CHAPTER IX.

It was about two hours after sunrise when the last files of the royal army extricated themselves from the streets of Corbeil, and although some difficulty and delay occurred in consequence of the narrowness of the bridge and ways through which the army had been forced to defile, yet so ably was the advance conducted, that no breaks were made in the line of march, but the communication between the van and rear was maintained uninterrupted. As the troops cleared the suburbs, their order was changed in regular succession, the fronts of

the several columns being increased to the full width of the broad highway, and their depth in the same degree diminished; the cavalry of the advanced guard was held well in hand, and the open woodlands on either side the causeway occupied by strong bodies of light troops, sweeping the country a league's breadth, and keeping somewhat in advance of the main army. It was a beautiful gay sight—the long files winding rapidly along, now seen, now lost among the leafy screens of the dense forest, the many-coloured cornets of the cavalry glittering through the tree-tops, and their bright armour flashing out in many a line of dazzling lustre. Rapidly they advanced throughout the whole of that fine summer's morning, so that, just as the sun had reached the meridian, the heads of the advanced columns, mounting the heights above Villeneuve St. George, came into sight of the enemy posted in force upon the elevated ground, between that town and Charenton, with a small battery of heavy guns planted on a steep knoll

ommanding the streets of the town, and filading the bridge across the Hyère, or eres, which lay at its base. At the same oment the two marêchals, each with his ff, galloped across the summit to reconitre the position of Lorraine.

It took but little time for a general of Turne's unequalled skill to form his plan and upon it. One brief glance showed him at to attempt the passage of the river, hich was unfordable, and only to be trarsed by a long, narrow bridge of stone, mmanded by the cannon on the hill, and fended by a strong *tête de pont*, would be here loss of valuable time, and only to be ected by a vast sacrifice of life; while it ould have remained in the power of the duke, leaving a small part of his infantry to defend the town and dispute the bridge, until ch time as he could fall back with all his rse, composing the main force of his army, Charenton, and then crossing his bridge of ats, to effect his junction with the princes. is, in effect, would have frustrated all his

views; and it is certain, that, for the time, the royal army was in a situation full of difficulty, if not danger, from which it was extricated only by the splendid genius of its commander.

Turenne, knowing the country well, and being aware that, at the distance of some three or four miles toward Brie, the Hyère was fordable in many places, determined instantly to march along its banks to the eastward, and, passing it as soon as possible, to turn the enemy's position in the direction of Grosbois, and force him to a general action. In order to do this, it was, however, necessary to alter the whole order of his march; his cavalry, which had up to this time composed the van, being now wanted in the rear, which it would be in the power of the duke to attack while counter-marching, by throwing his light troops across the Hyère. This change was rapidly and splendidly effected, scarcely a half-hour's interruption of the march ensuing from the movement.

The forest of Senârs, which covered a

reat portion of the country between Ville-
euve and Corbeil, broke off entirely mid-
ay the slope which has so many times been
entioned; and left the foot of the declivity
d all the banks of the little river quite
en and free from encumbrance to the left
nd, although toward the right the wood-
nds stretched in an uninterrupted range
ite down to the angle formed two or
ree miles off by the junction of the Hyère
th the broad Seine.

A narrow road, the same by which Sir
nry and his daughter were travelling
en attacked on the preceding day, came
o the highway at a little hollow some
ndred yards above the meadows, into
ich it descended shortly, skirting along
e edge of the great forest, and by this
row defile it was now necessary for the
ole host to pass.

The cavalry under D'Hocquincourt was
ved down by the main causeway to the
adows, and, thence deploying, formed front
ard the bridge in a transverse line from
e Hyère to the edge of the forest facing

north-westerly; and half a battery of field-pieces were planted on the road so as to sweep the bridge in case of any rally. This done, the infantry filed corps by corps through the narrow lane until they had all gained the level ground to the eastward of the cavalry; when they fell into solid columns, filling the whole space from the edge of the road, by which the guns were moving down to the margin of the stream.

Until the whole of this intricate manœuvre was accomplished, Turenne sat quietly upon his horse, with all his staff about him, watching the enemy's position with jealous scrutiny, and sending now and then an officer to expedite the movements of the various regiments. Once only did he quit his station—after the royal regiment of Irish had passed him, cheering as they did so—when he rode down a little way from the hillock which he had occupied to meet the Duke of York, whom he requested to halt for the present, and remain near his person; nor

this happened long, before the last of
infantry had formed on the low grounds,
all the cannon were in full march by
road immediately above them; when
enne, having despatched one aide-de-
o to D'Hocquincourt, with orders to
off the cavalry, and form them in the
and sent another to the van to set the
s in motion, cantered down from his
, and wheeled into the lane, by which
uld communicate at his ease with any
on of the column.

st as he turned the corner from the
way the quick eye of the great com-
er fell upon the broken carriage of
enry Oswald, which, all stripped and
ntled, had been dragged into the low
wood on the roadside, by the pioneers
vanguard. About it lay the bodies
en or eight horses, their housings and
arness plundered, and not less than a
of human corpses entirely naked, as
ad been left by those human harpies
agers of their own party, and show-

ing, by the terrific wounds which scarred their ghastly limbs, the prowess of their daring conquerers.

Turenne pointed toward the hideous pile as he rode by with his leading staff, and turning to the duke—

"This proves," he said, "the perfect truth of Bellechassaigne's relation; and by my word—although in contradiction of all military order—as gallant an onslaught as ever was made yet by four men upon forty. *Tête dieu*, each man of the assailants, not to exclude Bellechassaigne's troopers, must have killed three men with his own hand!"

"And this, I trust," replied the duke, "will prove a good defence to them, especially now that we find their indiscretion has had no evil consequence."

"No! no! your highness," answered the general, laughing; "that last were a poor reason. They must not get off quite so lightly. Had that been possible, I would not have refused so slight a matter to your gracious intercession. Consider, this was a

ry grave offence, directly contrary to lers, and actually emperilling the whole ny, the whole cause of the king. Besides, r cavaliers, all independent as they are, l serving with their own men for loyalty l honour, with neither pay nor profit, are er insubordinate and readier to consult eir own rash fancies than to obey com- nds, especially if such suit not their adlong and absurd caprices. No! no! s was too flagrant, and we want an ex- ple."

'Surely, oh! surely," the duke interposed in, with an expression of strong interest played in his harsh features, and his voice ually quivering from the agitation of his nd, "you do not think of a military exe- ion! Two such fine, gallant youths—it re too terrible!"

'Not I," replied Turenne, quite quietly— ot I indeed. Good officers are not so nty on his majesty's side nowadays, that an afford to shoot them. As for Belle- ssaigne, too, we cannot spare him possi-

bly—he is the life and soul of the whole army—half the most desperate things that are done, he does himself—and all the rest by proxy, driving all our young fellows half-mad with rivalry and hot ambition—no! no! we can't spare Bellechassaigne! and as to this young English fellow, by the Lord! I believe he is the madder of the two. Fancy a charge, in a velvet hat and coat, with four unarmed retainers, upon two score or better of well-appointed troopers. I half believe I *should* have shot Bellechassaigne, if he had obeyed his orders and left him to his fate, as he should have done. What does your highness know of this young devil with the unpronouncable name? Has he been ever such a dare devil?"

"I have heard say," answered the duke, "that throughout the long civil war, though he was then but very young, scarcely indeed more than a boy, he was the shrewdest and most daring of all Goring's officers; and in this last unfortunate affair, he was undoubtedly among the best of all my brother's

rtisan commanders. In fact, it is to him
t his majesty is indebted for his own per-
al escape from his rebels. It is said
reover, and I fear *truly*, that if the king
l followed Wyvil's council, and charged
h all his horse, while Cromwell's men
re in confusion—for they were beaten
k, and all their cannon taken by a sally
n the town,—the fatal fight at Worcester
ght well have had a different conclu-
n."

'Ha! he is something more then than a
re swordsman," said Turenne. "I won-
what induced him to make this escapade.
could scarce hope for success, I should
ak; and the risk far surpassed the object
be attained—unless, indeed, he has been
tten by the *beaux yeux* of this fair Os-
d, who, they tell me, has turned the
ds of half our gallants."

'Oh no, it cannot, I am sure, be that,"
lied the other; "for I am certain he had
er seen her till that day. It is but a little
re than five months since he came to

Paris, having, with difficulty, made his escape from England. Since that time, he has been constantly about my person; and from the 21st of April, has been upon my staff with the army. In the meantime, Sir Henry Oswald has been, as you know, in the Low Countries on business of his eminence, and this young lady with him; so that I feel quite sure that they have never met till yesterday. If I am right in my opinion, it is but an ambitious craving for distinction, joined to a spirit naturally bold and ardent, that has led him into this deed of rashness. Besides this, marêchal, there was a story how he effected his escape by the aid of a beautiful young girl, to whom he is said to be troth plighted."

"Well!" answered Turenne, "since no harm is done, we can hold them under arrest until this battle has been fought with Monsieur of Lorraine—it will be something of a punishment to these men, such as I know Bellechassaigne, and such as you describe the other, to hinder them from the

nour of this field. After that we can call em to a court-martial, and sentence them be reprimanded. By my faith! the next ne Bellechassaigne gives me any trouble, l sentence him to serve in the army, and t to draw his sword for a whole campaign. t come, your royal highness, the vanguard ıst be nearing the fords of the Hyère, we re best gallop on, and see what goes on ere. If monsieur is on the alert, and has t some of his horse to dispute our passage, may have something to do yet."

And with the words he put spurs to his rse, and with the Duke of York and his ff rode forward as fast as he could, for the truction offered by the guns and tumbrils the artillery, until he passed beyond m all, when he galloped forward at full ed, and reached the leading regiment of ntry just as they reached the first ford.

The little river at this point spread out to eral times its ordinary width, rippling idly over a gravelly bed in several chan-s, with narrow islands of meadow land

intervening. Above this, for about a quarter of a mile, the stream flowed between deep banks in a strong and sluggish volume; and then another ford, somewhat deeper and narrower than the former, but still quite passable for horse, occurred where the sandy road wound down from the hill, and crossed the bed of the Hyère. The third and best ford was still a quarter of a mile higher, and there the river was easy to be passed by five hundred men in front at a time. On the farther side the meadows were quite open, so that Turenne could overlook them for more than a mile in distance, and not a brake or thicket was in sight, that could conceal a dozen skirmishers.

Halting upon a little knoll beside the upper of the three fords, the general sent off his aides-de-camp in all directions to hasten the march of the infantry to the spot where he stood—to direct the artillery to come down from the hill, and pass by the lower ford of the three—and to bring up the cavalry with all speed to the deepest pas-

age. All this was brilliantly and success-
ully conducted, and before sunset several
egiments of infantry had crossed over, and
ad been formed in line of battle, facing
lmost due west, and having the high road
om Brie Comte Robert to Grosbois—from
hich last place they might be something
ore than three miles distant—on their
ght hand, and the river which they had
rded on the left. About the same time
he guns were got across, though not with-
ut much labour and some difficulty, and
laced in a second line behind the advanced
fantry, which had been pushed forward so
s to cover all the three fords from the
rmy of Lorraine, in case it should advance
o meet them.

At this time, just as the cavalry—which,
hen it was evident that no attack would
e made on the rear, had gained the road
n the hill side, and so outstripped the
ntre and rear of the foot—were beginning
defile towards the low grounds on the
ver, the general, who had taken no re-

freshment, since the army had left Balancour before sunrise, ordered a halt, that the men might cook and get their suppers, it being his intention to make no longer pause than was necessary for that purpose, but to march directly on Villeneuve. Fires were lighted now in all directions, and nothing could be fancied or described more wildly picturesque and striking than the scene that was presented on both sides the river, in the soft rich light of the summer sunset. The splendid uniforms and glittering armour of the confused and busy groups that bustled round the camp fires, or sat in lounging attitudes on the soft green sward; the long lines of stately chargers picquetted in advance of the dismounted cavalry; the number of bright standards and many-coloured cornets, pitched in the ground at the head of every regiment and squadron; the mounted officers careering to and fro amid the whirling crowds; the frequent stacks of arms flashing and twinkling in the sunbeams; and over all the broad blue shadows

lently creeping, as some great cloud swept cross the sky, before the soft west wind, nd intercepted the now level rays of the eclining sun!

Close to the margin of the river, hard by e upper ford, a group of three tall ash-ees, the only trees indeed which were to e seen in the meadows, overhung a small mpid basin, from which a tiny rill of ystal water stole away through the long ick grass, to join the broader stream. nder these trees a Persian carpet had been read on the ground, and a large piece of arlet cloth stretched over the shafts of ree or four long pikes extended from tree tree, forming a sort of rude extempora-eous pavilion, under the shade of which e Marêchal Turenne, with several of his incipal officers, and among these the Duke York, and two or three of his personal endants, sat jesting and conversing mer-y, while round a blazing heap of fagots at short distance four or five servants were work unloading a stout sumpter-mule,

and making preparations for the
meal of their masters. Two or
hampers had been unpacked alread
their contents, in the shape of sund
and platters, and other implements o
were displayed on the carpet about
the officers were sitting; while in th
of the spring a dozen or more of th
necked flasks, which from time alm
memorial have been consecrated to
sparkling wines of champagne, were
cess of cooling for the banquet.

While this was going on, and
lively quip and repartee were passin
that merry circle, the quick glance
marêchal detected a slight bustle
lines of the cavalry, that were the
on the hill side—a dozen or two
troopers getting in haste to their c
and falling into order as if they
pected an attack. The next minute
man came into view, galloping ve
down the forest road, and instantl
five or six more followed him, at t

urried pace. On reaching the little squad f mounted men, who had ridden out to reeive them, they halted for a few seconds, nd then, an orderly accompanying them, ame down without relaxing their speed oward the general's station.

"Whom have we here, in such hot aste?" cried Turenne, gazing anxiously at ne approaching riders. "Messengers from ne rear!—It cannot be that Condé has folowed us in force—No, no! impossible—imossible! Nor can Lorraine, I think, have arched on Charenton. Who is it, gentlen? who is it? I thought I had known very officer of the army, and yet I cannot ake him out at this distance. 'It is an ld man too!"—and while he was yet speakg, before indeed any one of his train had me to answer, a tall fine-looking veteran, ith a stern aquiline countenance, a prosion of long silvery hair, and a pair of ick white moustaches, came up at a galp; and checking his horse shortly, alighted a few paces only from the ash-trees. He

was clad in a rich suit of half armour, with a buff coat, magnificently laced with gold, worn over the cuirass ; a high-crowned broad-leafed hat, with a black feather, covered his head, his morion being carried by one of his servants, and his long basket-hilted rapier hung from a broad scarf of blue silk; his air was highly proud and military, but neither his port nor his complexion, which must have been, before it was embrowned by wind and sunshine, unusually fair and florid, at all resembled that of a Frenchman.

All seemed to recognise him as soon as he dismounted, for all rose up to greet him, and Turenne himself, accompanied by the English duke, advanced some two or three steps, the first exclaiming,

"Ha! I am charmed to see you, good Sir Henry. Such men as you are ever well met with upon the eve of battle. We heard, too, that we were in some danger of having lost you altogether yesterday."

"To which, indeed, you owe the fact of

my being here—advantage I will not call it, notwithstanding that you are pleased to be so complimentary. I was indeed desirous of seeing you even earlier in the day, but I had difficulty in getting men and horses in Corbeil. I had gone out across the river in the direction of Montlhery, where I expected to meet with my servants before you entered, and I did not return until it was past noon. There having learned that the two gallant gentlemen, to whose good service I owe my own life and my daughter's honour, are in disgrace, under arrest and in some danger, I have made all the haste I could accomplish to overtake your excellency, and beseech your pardon for them; which I sincerely trust you will not think too much to grant me, seeing that I have fought some years for the same cause with you, and done—as you have been good enough to say—some service to the king, our master!"

"Sir Henry Oswald," Turenne replied, very gravely, "you are too old, and far too

good an officer not to be well aware what detriment arises *ever* to our armies from the determination—for I can use no other term to express what I mean—of our young gallants to act on their own impulse and responsibilities, instead of obeying orders. In this case, the positive instructions given by myself to these gentlemen, were to discover themselves, *on no account whatever*, to the enemy—my object being a surprise! Their conduct in disobeying such instructions, to say the least, was utterly unpardonable. I scruple not to say, that had Monsieur de Lorraine acted with one-half his accustomed foresight, all we should ever have seen of his army would have been the last files of his rear-guard crossing the bridge at Charenton, if we had even got up thither in time to witness that. As it is, even now, to-morrow's noon will show whether I can prevent his junction with the princes. Had Monsieur de Bellechassaigne obeyed orders, and returned to me undiscovered, we should

have fallen on him unawares, and beaten him ere this, God willing! You must perceive, Sir Henry, that in this matter martial law must take its course. Had it been possible for me to gratify you, it would have given me the highest pleasure—if in aught else I can oblige you, it shall be done forthwith."

"Monsieur de Turenne," answered Henry, haughtily, "I hardly thought to have been refused at all in a thing of so slight moment. Nor when you promised me of your own accord, upon the breaches of Hesdin, to grant me any possible request, did I expect that I should have occasion to remind you of your words. As it is, marêchal, I call that promise to your recollection, and claim this as my first—my last!—request!"

"But, sir," Turenne made answer, with cold inflexible politeness, "your request is *not* possible. Had it been in *my* power to grant it, *you* would have had no need to prefer it. For, in that case, I should have

been too proud to oblige his Grace of York, to whom, within the hour, I have been reluctantly compelled to make the same denial. One thing I can assure you—and I do so with pleasure, as your strong interest in their behalf is natural—that neither their honour nor their lives will be emperilled; further than this, I cannot speak,—nor should you ask me. And now, to change the subject, which cannot be agreeable to either of us, we are about to sup, or *dine*, if you have not done so already; will you not join our party? I know not well what we can offer you; but I doubt not that Merlache yonder will make us tolerable cheer; and I am sure that we have got some right good wine. Come! come! old fellow-soldier, lay by that brow of gloom, and sit down with us."

"I must request your excellency," answered the veteran, with a deep and formal bow, "to excuse me, seeing—"

"But if his excellency do so," said the

ıke of York, taking a step in advance, and
tting him short in the middle of his sen-
ıce, "*I* cannot. So, Sir Henry Oswald,
u will be seated; I command, on your al-
ıiance to his majesty, my brother. What,
ın," he added, with a gay smile, which
easingly illuminated his dark features,
what, man, would you have the marêchal
ant you a boon, which he has not one
ur ago refused to the blood royal? Tush!
u forget your manners—but a word in
ur ear—our good friends will be cared for
and so sit down, and prove yourself, as the
ons have it, *buen camarado*."

To this, of course, there could be no reply.
ıe veteran, half-satisfied, yet half-reluctant,
ıned the gay circle; supper was served,
d the bright wine went round, and flash-
g repartees, and keen wit, and light
ıghter, became the order of the evening;
til at length, after the sun had set, and
rkness spread over the festive host, and
rches had been lighted for more than an
ur, the general rose from the carpet, which

served his company for seats an
alike, and gave the word for the
the infantry to beat to arms, and t
pets to sound "Boot and Saddle!"

CHAPTER X.

THROUGHOUT the livelong night the meadows and the banks of the Hyère were lighted by the ruddy blaze of many a flitting torch, borne by the fast succeeding regiments, and the yet broader glare of many a beacon, kindled along the line of march to indicate the route to the rear of the army. Midnight was passed already before the last of the royal host had extricated themselves from the ford, and formed themselves in line of battle across the meadows on the further side. This feat having, by dint of vast exertion on the part of the officers, been ac-

complished, the trumpets sounded the advance, and they marched on all through the hours of darkness, at the best pace the obscurity of the night, which was much overclouded, and the obstacles they encountered—in the shape of marshy ground, and of many small rivulets and brooks which made down to the river from the hills beyond—permitted.

At length the day broke, clear and promising, and the great sun came forth just as the army had passed partially through, but principally to the left of, the village of Grosbois, a little better than a league from Villeneuve St. George, where the Duke of Lorraine was supposed to be still posted. As soon as it was quite light, so that objects could be perceived at a sufficient distance, Turenne began to press the advance, urging the men to march as fast as possible, and throwing forward advanced parties of light infantry and horse to reconnoitre, keeping the higher grounds, himself with the Duke of York and his staff to the right of the line.

t had not been long day, however, before a arty of the cavalry, who had been pushed orward, was seen returning at a smart trot long the high road from the direction of illeneuve; and when they drew so near as o render the recognition of particular per- ons possible, Monsieur de Beaujan, a friend f the cardinal, who had been employed by im in the negotiations which had been oing on uninterruptedly with the Duke of orraine, and Monsieur d'Agecourt, captain f the duke's guards, were discovered to be f the number.

A few minutes sufficed to disclose that Monsieur of Lorraine was well disposed to reat; the purpose of his envoy being to re- uest Turenne to delay his advance for the resent, and to acquaint the Duke of York hat the King of England was in the camp f Lorraine, whither he had come on the receding evening, with the hopes of effect- ng an accommodation. After a short pause f reflection, the marêchal requested the uke to ride back with the envoy, who was

empowered to plight the Duke of Lorraine's honour, that he should be safe to come and go, inasmuch as his brother was desirous of conversing with him on the subject. The prince immediately consented; and being charged with Turenne's ultimate conditions, which were comprised in three brief articles—"That the Duke of Lorraine should immediately destroy the bridge of boats at Charenton, subject to the instructions of Monsieur de Barenne, who went for that purpose with the Duke of York—that he should engage to quit the boundaries of France within the space of fifteen days—and that he should pledge his honour to give no further aid to the princes"—rode off, with a few personal attendants only, to the duke's quarters.

In the mean time, however, seriously doubting the good faith of the duke, and fancying that his object was only to gain time, Turenne continued to advance as fast as he was able, taking advantage of every favourable position, and keeping himself in readiness to act at a moment's notice on the

ensive. In the interim, the Duke of York
ade his way to the position above Ville-
uve, extending from that town on the right
nk, to the road from Grosbois to Paris on
left, which Monsieur of Lorraine was
tifying with all the skill of an able general,
led to all the personal activity of a shrewd
dier.

As the young English prince rode up the
ttle slope, at the southern base of which the
n was situated, he was struck very forcibly
the strength of the position, and formed a
h opinion of the ability by which it had
n made tenable, as it certainly seemed
be, against a superior force. All the
nt had been spent in unintermitted
our at the construction of five strong
hen works, in which the main part of
infantry had been placed—one powerful
alion having its post, as a division of
rve, behind the principal redoubt in the
re of the line. Behind the foot, which
not amount to above three thousand

men, the cavalry, five thousand strong, were drawn up in two lines of battle; and, above these, upon a height near the junction of the rivers, his cannon overlooked the whole, from a small barbette battery, at which the duke himself was labouring, like a common pioneer, pickaxe in hand, when his noble visiter approached him. But Monsieur de Lorraine, before receiving him, sent one of his equerries to conduct him to the quarters of his brother, who was at that time in the town-hall of Villeneuve.

Charles, who was anxiously desirous of accommodating matters between the court and the duke, expressed his apprehensions that the latter would never consent to them.

"I tell you, James," he said, "he has so strongly promised the princes, that he cannot—od's fish!—he cannot now turn back."

"Then must the sword decide it; for certainly the marêchal will not relax one

," answered his brother; and, as he so, the Duke of Lorraine entered apartment, and having received the age of Turenne, continued for some to joke and trifle in his accustomed n of half-sneering badinage with the es; it was not long, however, before Duke of York was convinced by his ner, that much of this raillery was d, and at variance with his real sen- nts.

ith regard to the destruction of the e he readily assented, and despatched al of his officers, with Monsieur de nne, to order his engineers to cease the construction for the present; but the rest, he protested vehemently nothing ever should induce him to his signature to conditions so disho- ble.

en, finding that the duke would give no hope that any others would be ted by Turenne, he begged the king d Lord Jermyn back with the duke

as a mediator, saying in a manner half-complimentary and half-sarcastic, that he feared much his royal highness would be led, by his chivalric and martial disposition, to cast his vote on the side of war rather than of peace.

To this Charles willingly assented; and, after a few more compliments, the Duke of York returned to the royal army, and Monsieur de Lorraine hastened away to complete his arrangements for receiving the attack of Turenne.

It did not take the duke and Lord Jermyn many minutes to reach the advanced parties of the marêchal, which were already almost within cannon-shot of the Lorrainers; while the whole meadows were filled with the bright lines of the compact and orderly foot-regiments, pushing on very fast with an unbroken front, their standards fluttering gaily in the light summer-wind, and the steel-heads of their pikes, and the long barrels of their polished muskets flashing back the early rays of the morning

shine. The field-pieces with their cais-
and tumbrils, which had been drawn
g the high road on the right flank,
e moving down toward the centre of the
t; and interspersed amongst the dense
of the fantassins, the squadrons of the
-equipped cavalry were pushing for-
l, or wheeling round from the rear,
to gain the flanks, with hundreds of
iantly-coloured cornets flaunting above
clear steel morions, and gorgeous scarfs
cassocks, partially covering their po-
d armour.

was a splendid spectacle indeed to
actised eyes; but those, who now
ed on it, had been too long accustomed
ll the pomp and pageantry of warfare
ntemplate it in any other light than as a
ination of scientific movements — a
g game of chess—played at by one,
in those days, and for full many an after
had no superior in his knowledge of
terrific art.

lloping on, as fast as they were able,

and constantly inquiring where they should find the marêchal, the envoys made their way among the regiments, several of which, as the duke passed, cheered him with the wild homage of their Irish acclamations; and soon reached a spot, where, surrounded by his staff, the noble general was standing on the ground, with his charger held by a groom beside him, while his attendants were engaged in putting on his armour.

"Well! you have come back in good season," he cried merrily, "Monsieur le Duc, and, as I judge, in vain; since the Lorrainers hold the heights in force, and we might see just now the cannoniers at work loading their guns in the battery yonder. Your men are in the rear," he added, pointing with the leading staff, which he still held, "but not far off—you were best ride to them at once and arm yourself; for we shall be engaged, I fancy, before half an hour. But who is this you have brought with you — my Lord Jermyn?"

Who seeks on the part of Monsieur
ring your excellency," answered the
"to accept some more moderate con-
ns."

is impossible—utterly!" Turenne in-
pted him, very quickly.

d, though Lord Jermyn employed
argument that he could think of, to
ade the marêchal, all was in vain;
after an ineffectual attempt to prevail
e Duke of York to return with him,
alloped back as hard as his horse
carry him to the works of the Lor-
s.

anwhile, Turenne had finished arming;
riding forward to the centre of his
ce, was making all his dispositions
e attack, when—to the surprise of all
s—the King of England himself came
to prefer the same request, which he
as a personal favour to himself; but,
g that Turenne was still inflexible, he
d him once more to send the same
to the duke.

Monsieur de Godagne was then despatched with the conditions written fairly out, and with instructions to have them signed upon the spot; in default of which, the signal would be given instantly to commence firing.

No halt was made, however; and now the cannon were unlimbered, having been placed in battery against the enemy's works upon a little rising ground; and the different corps which had been ordered to storm the redoubts, took up their positions, while a strong force of tirailleurs were seen wheeling round the right, with a view to occupy the great woods, which covered the left flank of the duke's army.

Every thing seemed to denote the approach of a general action; and the hearts of all men were filled with that strange and awful feeling, which is not fear, nor yet impatience, but an inexplicable blending of the two, which all have at some time experienced, before the step is taken that throws them into imminent peril.

It was at this critical moment, just as the Duke of York had armed himself from head to foot, in a complete suit of beautifully finished Spanish steel, and was in the act of mounting a strong charger which was held ready for him by a dismounted trooper, that several figures came into sight on the meadows in the rear, riding very fast from the fords of the Hyère. There was something so peculiar in the appearance of one of these figures, even when seen at a very great distance, that the attention of the prince was attracted to it instantly; so much so, that after gazing fixedly for a minute or two, he called to an orderly to give him the perspective glass, which was slung in a leathern-case across his shoulders; he had scarce received this, and looked through it for a moment, before he closed it with an exclamation of extreme surprise, at seeing that the person was no other than a female, splendidly mounted, and habited in the richest costume of the day.

He paused a moment, and raised his hand to his forehead thoughtfully; then turning his horse's head toward the new comers, rode swiftly a few yards in that direction; but again, as the thought struck him that he was riding away from the enemy, and that too at the very time when they might be expected to open their fire, he drew up his bridle, and casting one more look to the group in question, wheeled his horse round, and took his way to join Turenne in the centre of the front line.

At this moment he could see the marêchal, who was sitting on his charger within point-blank range of the cannon on the hill, and scarcely out of musket-shot of the foot in the principal redoubt, raise himself slightly in his stirrups, and wave his truncheon pointing toward the works. The regiments of Picardy and Carignan, which were the nearest to the marêchal, taking the signal as soon as it was given, advanced at a quick, steady, *pas-de-charge* toward the great redoubt, with their pikes levelled and

expecting every instant to receive the volley of the duke's fantassins; but, as they moved, the regiment of York, or Royal Irish, who were a little to the left of the centre, jealous of the French troops, and fearful that any others should be under fire before themselves, set up the wild and thrilling cheer of their country, and dashed forward, brandishing their arms, at a pace that would have precipitated them, before many minutes, into the hostile lines.

Perceiving this, the duke set spurs to his war-horse, and drove across the open ground at the top of his speed, taking three or four small ditches in his stride, until he overtook his regiment, which was, perhaps, two, or at most three hundred yards from the breastworks. The pace with which they had rushed forward was so great, that they were quite unable to sustain it for the whole distance; and the consequence was, that some of the men outstripping the rest, the line was much

shaken and disordered; and, had it continued its impetuous and uneven progress, must very soon have fallen into entire disarray.

In some respects, however, this was fortunate; for the subaltern officers, who in the first instance had been infected with the same rashness which had overset the discipline of the men, had found time for reflection, and had perceived the fatal consequences of the headlong rush, by which they were now hurried on themselves, powerless to control their soldiery. The men themselves, moreover, were many of them breathless and overdone; so that when the duke overtook them, and wheeled his horse round their right, pulling him up in the face of their lines, midway between them and the enemy, and raising his leading staff high in air, called to them in a voice full of determination and authority, to "halt," they did so on the instant. Ashamed of their own mad precipitation, the officers toiled strenuously to reform the shaken

ks, and in less time than it has taken to
ribe it, the lines presented an unbroken
lar front, ready to march in steady order
nst the fortified masses of the Lorrainers.
duke addressed them in a few words
igh and somewhat harsh remonstrance;
then, as he perceived that the French
mns, which had been outstripped by the
long rush of the Irish, had in the in-
l come up and formed an even line,
ing his sword from the sheath, he dis-
nted, and gave his horse and leading staff
olonel Worden, his equerry.

Now, gentlemen," he cried, "we will
nce together. So in God's name, for
nd and France. Forward, Ma——"
he word died upon his tongue before
order was pronounced—for as he raised
oice to give it audibly, his eye fell on a
l, white ensign, which was displayed
the barbette-battery on the hill, and on
rms of several mounted officers gallop-
astily down to the redoubts as in obe-
e to some new and sudden order.

Within the space of a few seconds, before he had time to consider well the meaning of the movement, a small white flag was hoisted on each of the redoubts, and the next minute the French regiments to his left halted, so that now doubting nothing but that the Duke of Lorraine had consented to the marêchal's conditions, he gave the word to his men to "halt and stand firm," and immediately remounted his charger, and resumed his truncheon.

He had scarce settled himself, however, firmly in his saddle, before an orderly rode up, and informed him that an accommodation had been made, and that the marêchal required his presence, begging him to leave orders with the lieutenant-colonel of the Irish, to hold them steady to their arms, as there might well be treachery, but not to stir a pace without fresh orders. The duke gave the directions necessary, and without loss of time returned to join the marêchal; but long before he reached him, he saw the female figure, whom he had noticed at a distance,

gallop up to the assembled officers, amid the undisguised astonishment and noisy exclamations of the soldiery, and springing from the saddle, throw herself on the ground before the general's charger, clasping her hands about his booted leg, and seeming to address him with wild vehemence. It may be readily supposed, that a sight so strange as this prompted the young prince to hurry, even faster than before, to the spot where it was enacting; but it was not mere curiosity that urged him to make haste, for, from the moment of her first appearance, he had suspected who the lady was that dared to brave, not only the dread perils of a battle-field, but the world's censure, which must follow proceedings so unfeminine and rash.

Rapidly as he spurred, however, he could not come up to the presence of Turenne in time to witness all that passed; for, in the first place, several servants in liveries which he well knew, followed their mistress at full speed to the spot, covering the group beyond from his gaze; and, in the second, all the

staff had simultaneously leaped from their horses, and gathered round the lady and the general. For some short space it seemed to the duke, that the press was so dense around the latter, as to prevent him from dismounting; for his plumed hat and noble head were clearly visible above the crowd, though bending down toward the suppliant at his feet—presently these, however, disappeared; and it was evident from the motions of the group, beginning to diverge, that he had alighted and was conversing with the lady.

In virtue of his rank and illustrious birth, as soon as he had come up and given his horse to one of the equerries, way was made for the Duke of York; and in a moment he perceived that his suspicions had been too correct, and that it was indeed Isabella Oswald who had actually ridden through a great part of the night, and made her way —exposed to rude surmise at least, if not to actual contumely—through the disorderly and vicious followers of the camp, to prefer as it seemed some personal request to the

marêchal upon the very field of battle. The first words that fell on the duke's ears were from the lips of that lovely girl; and, although under circumstances so unusual, and at a time so fearful to the nature of a delicate woman, her voice faltered not the least, nor were her accents tremulous or hurried; but every tone, though low and femininely soft, was clear, and evenly pitched, and thrilling as a silver-trumpet.

"I have your word then, Marêchal Turenne—a word which never yet was questioned, much less broken—pledged for their liberty and honour!"

"You have indeed—you have indeed, dear lady," answered the general, in tones that manifested his strong sympathy. "They are free from this moment—and, had I deemed it possible that you, the daughter of my old friend and comrade, could possibly have been exposed to *this*, by all my hopes of heaven! I would have cast down rank and power, and life and all—save honour—as I cast down that gilded bauble"—and with the words he tossed away his marshal's

bâton—"rather than so much as arrest them! For God's sake now, dear lady, let there be no more said about it; but presently withdraw. Peace is concluded here, and I will send you with a trumpet, and a befitting train, into Villeneuve St. George, until such time as I can have Sir Henry summoned from the woods yonder, where he commands our tirailleurs, to take charge of you. I pray no words, young lady; you know not—cannot dream what risks you have run last night, or what will be said of this hereafter?"

"I come of a bold race, marêchal," she answered, with a scornful motion of her head, tossing away the ringlets which had fallen over her high brow and flashing features. "Nor am I the first daughter of it that has looked on a foughten field, if annals tell the truth—that I should shrink from doing right for the risk of a little peril!"

"There are some risks, lady"—the general made reply, with an impressive and grave air—"which none, however rash, should incur ever!—some perils which the

bravest should avoid! Honour is not a thing to risk—nor repute to endanger!—and—"

"Honour—repute!" she interrupted him, her clear voice ringing supernaturally shrill, and her eyes blazing with indignant anger—*my* honour! who dare question it? *My* repute never has been risked!—or, if it have, I know how to defend the one—how to avenge the other! But you mean kindly—and, I am certain, honourably, marêchal," she continued, her momentary anger vanishing, as she perceived and appreciated the General's motives; "and, with thanks for your kindness, I will submit to your dictation."

"Indeed I do, dear lady," Turenne made answer; "and so far from impugning your repute, or questioning your honour, there is no gentleman in France who would so gladly draw his sword to right you. Nor did I mean to say that *you* had risked them, though I must say that you have acted rashly, and given some scope to ill tongues,

which everywhere abound; but, by my honour! were I Sir Henry Oswald, I should know how to deal with the knaves that led you hither."

"It was Sir Henry's own fault," answered she, somewhat more meekly than before, "if fault there be, that I am here at all! He promised, when he left Corbeil, that he would send me tidings when he saw you; and here you tell me that he knew last night these gentlemen were in no peril, yet hath he sent me no word of it; and all the town was ringing with rumour that they should die this evening! Believe me, sir, believe me," she went on speaking, with much feeling and some vehemence, "I felt and knew that much might be said against my coming hither—but I knew likewise that, with six trusty followers, there could no real risk befall my father's daughter, even from the basest of the king's army! And I felt more than all the rest, that it would comport ill indeed with my honour, that two brave gentlemen should fall dis-

graced upon the scaffold, for rescuing that honour, and I not move a step to aid them. These, noble Turenne, only these were my motives. The gentlemen we speak of, I never saw till two days since—never may see again! and scarce should recognise if I did see them!"

She broke off suddenly, and, overpowered quite by the revulsion of her feelings, burst into a paroxysm of violent and convulsive weeping.

Greatly distressed by this occurrence, at a time, too, when he was so deeply occupied with other matters, and when his presence was indeed momentarily called for, the marêchal looked anxiously about him for a moment ere he spoke, then,

"Monsieur de Clairvilliers," he cried, turning to an old officer of very high rank, "you are, I think, a dear friend of this young lady's father; and those gray hairs, blanched in the service of two Kings of France, may well defy all scandal—will you not, with our good Duke of York here, taking a trumpet

with you and a fit escort, lead this young lady to Villeneuve, and see her suited with apartments and proper female tendance? Meanwhile, I will despatch a message to the Duke of Lorraine, and our good friend Laloge here will spur his Barbary horse, from his pure love of the fair sex, until he find Sir Henry Oswald, and conduct him to his fair daughter."

The gay young officer bowed low, and darted away like a swallow over the level meads, in the direction of the great woods to the right; while Turenne, taking Isabella's hand in his own, kissed it respectfully, and said,

"And now, farewell, dear lady—all will go well, trust me! and yet I must beseech you to excuse me, for I have pressing calls upon my time; and his majesty must not have reason to complain that, besides pardoning his officers for disobeying orders, all for the bright eyes of a lovely lady, *I*, his commander in the field, myself neglect his service; even although the cause should be so worthy a true chevalier's devotion!"

His tone of badinage did much to reas-
e her, and she soon wiped her tears away,
was assisted to her horse by the young
ce himself; but, though she wept no
e, she was extremely grave and unwilling
converse, replying in monosyllables to
remarks as were addressed to her, until
was installed in safety in handsome
ings without the gates of Villeneuve;
n, thanking the duke and the other gen-
en who had accompained her, she ex-
sed a wish to be left alone, and retired
er chamber, there to reflect upon the
ge events of the past days.

CHAPTER XI.

THERE stood in those times a small, ancient castle, a part of which was believed be the work of the Romans, on the outskirts of Corbeil, although within the walls, of which indeed it formed an important angle, jutting out into the bosom of the broad Seine, and partially commanding the bridge, which, crossing the river, formed in this place the grand communication between the Orleannois and the Isle de France. It was old, even at that time, and has long ago fallen into decay, so total, that there are

no vestiges to be seen even of its foun-
ns; but although small, it was then by
eans deficient in strength, and having
repaired quite recently, and mounted
a few heavy cannon, it had been gar-
ed for some time past by a small
hment of artillerymen and a squa-
of light horse; the town being oc-
d by a whole regiment, and some-
even a stronger force of infantry.
these circumstances, and from its
ed position, it had been often used as
t of state prison, whether for officers
e king's party, accused of any serious
h of military discipline, or for such
ners of war as were not admitted to a
e of honour, or as were liable to
ges of high treason; and to its walls
il and Bellechassaigne had been con-
d on the morning of the advance
st Villeneuve.

was in a suite of apartments, if one
rately large room, with two light
s, containing each a truckle-bed, can

be called a suite, at the top of the principal tower—which was perhaps something better than a hundred feet in height—that the two friends were confined. Their quarters, had they not been designated by the term prison—a term capable of rendering even a palace hateful—though neither large, nor sumptuously furnished, would have been by no means unpleasant; for, owing to their elevation above the paved courtyard, and the height of the outward walls, the windows were not barred; and, from the situation of the building projecting far out into the current of the river, they commanded an extensive view over the richly-cultivated although somewhat flat expanse of the Orleannois, and over two bright reaches of the broad winding Seine.

Yet, notwithstanding this advantage, and although they were attended by their own servants, served with an excellent table, and permitted the use of books and papers, the time lagged wearily with the impatient and high-spirited prisoners; for both these men,

owever different in other points of view, ere of that class, who, like the Scottish ouglas of remote times, ever preferred the een fields and the azure vault of heaven, the soft Persian carpets and gold-fretted ofs of those luxurious days; who had ther "hear the lark sing than the mouse ueak," as the old borderer had it; and to om life itself, though coupled with every arm of power, and luxury, and wealth, if had not also been enlivened by change, d peril, and excitement, would have been arisome and odious.

The first long day wore over, and that, haps, more lightly than could have been pected, for there was something of adven- e even in their situation; something to ex- thought, and create surmises; something certain, and even thrilling, in the doubt of at should follow after; that strung their nds to a high key, and rendered them in ne sort heedless of the present. But when second day succeeded, and no signs, as they d anticipated, showed themselves either

of a court-martial, or of a summary execution, their minds began to wax uneasy, and their spirits dull, and their souls heavy.

Soon after breakfast, Bellechassaigne began to pace the floor with quick and irregular strides, pausing occasionally to look out of the window over the wide sun-lighted landscape, and turning suddenly away with a brief bitter curse, to traverse and retraverse the narrow limits of the chamber; and so, with little intermission, he continued during the whole day, answering shortly and impatiently to the chance words of his companion, and hurrying round and round the walls as if to seek an exit, with the impatient gestures of the caged hyena. Meanwhile, the English exile, no less disturbed and ill at ease than the young Frenchman, displayed the disorder of his mind in a way as different as possible from his companion. He had sat down at a small table by the window to wile away the time with the wild conceits and strange fancies of the Gargantua of Rabelais; but, though for the

first half hour he had turned a few pages, and smiled a few times, and once even laughed aloud, he soon lapsed into the depths of his own mind, and sat there quite immoveable, and seemingly unconscious of all external things; with his brow bent into a gloomy frown, pondering the past, the present, and the future; turning no leaf, reading no line of the licentious witty author; until—after noon had long stricken, and the servants had come in and out and arranged the board with wine, and meat, and all the preparations of the mid-day meal, without his raising so much as an eye from the book, which he scarce knew to be before him — his wilder fellow-prisoner clapped him upon the shoulder, and burst into a loud, rallying laugh.

"*Despardieux!* we are good companions and rare fellows too, to call ourselves tried soldiers— particularly you, who have been shut up, as you told me, for weeks together without fresh air or daylight—to take on thus absurdly, for a few days confinement

in good quarters! for that, I trow, will be the worst of it!"

"Ay! that is it!" answered Wyvil, a little wildly, as if he did not altogether catch the sense of Bellechassaigne's words—"that is just it! that is what I was thinking of."

"Well! wake up then, man; and see, here's dinner ready—they mean to fatten us, I trow, if that they do intend to kill us!" and thus for a short space they both shook off the pressure of their cares, and eat, and drank, and chatted; ay! and jested, as cheerfully as though they had been both at large; but, when the meal was finished, after a little effort to sustain a laborious conversation, their spirits flagged again, and both returned to their occupations, the partisan of restless and excited motion, the exile of deep, painful meditation.

Meanwhile night fell, and candles were lighted in the prison chamber, and at Bellechassaigne's bidding a stoup of wine and glasses were set up on the board, and for a space the two companions talked cheerfully enough

t their future prospects, and the events
e campaign, the partisan expressing his
ise that he had heard no sounds of can-
ding, which, had a battle taken place at
neuve, they could not have failed to do,
drawing from the fact strong cause for
ehension that the Duke of Lorraine might
fallen back on Charenton upon the first
, and actually crossed the bridge of boats
e Turenne had overtaken him.

hile they were eagerly and anxiously
ssing this, their attention was attracted
e sounds of some arrival, which created
siderable bustle in the court-yard below.
creaking of the *pont levis*, as it was
ed, the drawing of the hoarse bolts and
creaming of the rusty hinges was suc-
d by the clatter of horses' hoofs upon the
e, and the jingling of spurs upon the
ment as trooper after trooper leaped
his saddle ; torches were seen flashing
d fro, and hasty voices heard calling for
overnor. Amid the tumult the prison-
on detected, as with every sense on the

alert they listened to the din without, the words repeated many times—"News from the host—a message from Turenne!" and Bellechassaigne had just turned round to his companion exclaiming, "Now then we shall soon learn our fate," when a quick step came up the staircase, and along the corridor, and instantly the door of their prison was thrown open, and the head warder entered with a smile on his countenance.

"I bring you pleasant tidings," he said, "noble gentlemen, you are discharged from my custody; here are despatches from the army," and he laid two documents, addressed to the prisoners, upon the table. "The orders for your release," he added, "have been received in due form from the marêchal himself, and you can set forth on the instant, if it please you. Monsieur de Flamarin, with a party of light horse, awaits you at the gates."

"Lead on, then—lead on!" exclaimed Wyvil, "for by the Lord! I do not love to breathe the air of a gaol, a moment after I

quit it. Your orders are the same as
e, I fancy, Bellechassaigne."
A simple mandate," answered the parti-
" to report myself at the head-quarters
ıy regiment as soon as may be!" " Pre-
y," replied Wyvil, " so now to horse!—
orse! where shall we find our horses and
varlets, monsieur warder?"
They have been cared for, gentlemen,"
wered the man very civilly. " You will
them below, I think, by this time. Mon-
r de Flamarin bade us send for them
antly when he arrived, and one of my
ı ran down with his orderly to the Golden
n, where they were sent yesterday."
No time of course was wasted, and before
ıy minutes the friends were in the saddle,
l away toward Villeneuve, which they soon
ned from their friendly escort had been
cuated on that morning by Lorraine, and
upied by the royal army. Much had de
marin to tell them of the operations of the
ıy, of the repeated intercessions in their
ılf by the young English duke, and

by Sir Henry Oswald; and, last not least, of the arrival on the field of battle, just as the signal was on the point of being given, of a young lady, who had ridden all night through to win their pardon of the marêchal. He had not himself seen her, he declared, nor did he know who she was; but all the camp, he said, was ringing with the praises of her strange loveliness, the exquisite taste and fashion of her dress, her superb horsemanship, and, above all, her high and dauntless spirit, in traversing the midnight roads swarming with the licentious followers of the host, in riding up to the very muzzles of the enemy's cannon, even then about to open, and in defying, as it was said she did, the great Turenne, when at the head of the king's forces.

Both the companions, of course, instantly suspected who was the lady that had interposed to save them, and sundry were the questions which both put to de Flamarin, but all that they could learn was that she was tall and of an extreme loveliness, and that it was re-

ted she had ventured so much for the
e of the English cavalier.

I told you so," exclaimed Bellechassaigne,
h a gay ringing laugh; "did I not tell
so the night before last, Wyvil? it all
nes of your luck, man, in charging home
h a velvet coat on instead of a greasy elk
cassock and a steel harness. I knew no
ale heart in France could resist that pass-
ted pourpoint and the feathered hat! By
ven! I'll charge in my shirt the very next
nce I get, but I'll outdo you!" But Wyvil
wered nothing to his friend's raillery,
ming to be absorbed in deep and serious
litation; and it was observed and com-
ted upon by both his comrades, that he
unduly grave and almost sad during the
le of their ride to head-quarters.

De Flamarin, however, replied instantly,
o, you won't—not a bit of it, Bellechas-
ne; I heard the marêchal himself tell his
ness of York that he should sentence you
erve the whole campaign in the front of
r regiment, with your sword in the scab-

bard, and you know he's a man to keep his word!"

"I know he is, de Flamarin" said Bellechassaigne, still laughing, "and you know too that I am not exactly one to forfeit mine. So trust me, if he sentence me to that, I will serve in a shirt over my uniform instead of a cuirass; and, if my sword be nailed fast to my scabbard, why I must have three inches added to the length of my dagger, and trust to that and my pistols in the mêlée." De Flamarin was not slow to reply, and though Wyvil continued silent and abstracted all the time, the march through the dark woods was still enlivened with loud merriment, and now and then a song, until they reached the out posts of the army, which had been pushed nearly a league in advance of the bridge over the Hyère, on the road toward Corbeil, to guard against the possibility of any movement on the part of Condé, who, it was apprehended, might cross the Seine and attack the rear of the king's army.

The first intelligence they had of the exis-

nce of such a picquet—it had in fact been sted after de Flamarin had left Villeneuve, consequence of the appearance of the nce's vanguard on the other side the er, which had come up in less than an ur after the duke had abandoned his posi- n and begun to retreat—was the glare of a tch-fire, lighted by the road side on the st of the hill so often mentioned, and the d hum of many voices. No sentinel, it med, had been thrown out by the officer of picquet, and very little of precaution taken guard against surprise, from which, how- r, the nature of the ground in some de- e protected them. What was, however, n more blameworthy, so loud and jocund s their revelry, that it entirely drowned noise which the other party made in ap- aching, until they had come so near, that y might see the whole of the picquet; ich consisted of cavaliers of Lord Bristol's glish horse, and two or three officers of French guard, all of them, even to the vates, gentlemen of blood and honourable

lineage. To this it was attributable, that no distinction was made of rank or dignity, as they sat revelling round the fire, while many a flask went round, and the old forest rung with their bacchanalian glee.

Bellechassaigne, ever full of broad wit and wild humour, entreated de Flamarin to halt his party and steal up quietly, and so surprise the revellers; and, he assenting, as they crept up among the bushes between the feasters and their arms, which they had stacked at a little distance in the rear, the following words met their ears, loudly chaunted by a mellow though untaught voice, and were followed by a jovial chorus of applause, that might have been heard far and wide in the silent mid-night.

SOLDIER'S SONG.

Trowl, trowl the brown bowl—
Merrily trowl it, ho!—
For the nut-brown ale shall never fail,
However the seasons go.

Drink, drink! he who'll slink
When circling goblets flow,
That knave, I swear, will never dare,
Like a man, to meet the foe.

Then steep, steep your souls deep
In the wassail cup to-night;
For the next dayspring, perhaps, may bring
The dry and sober fight.
Chorus—Trowl, trowl, &c.

Play, play, brave boys to-day,
To-morrow we all may sleep—
Let each bowl be crown'd, sing the chorus round,
Oh, why should a soldier weep?

Up! up with each cup
To all who're tried and true!
The trump may blow, and the red blood flow,
But we're not the boys to rue.

Fill, fill, with a right goodwill,
Ere the passing moments fly,
For why should we wink or refuse our drink,
Whose duty 'tis to die.
Chorus—Then play, play, &c.

Wine, wine, comrades mine,
In wine the pledge must be,
When drink the brave to a soldier's grave,
Or a soldier's victory!

Fame, fame, and a deathless name,
That's what it is to die—
With our comrade's cheer in our deafening
And their charge in our glazing eye!

Then light, light be our hearts to-night,
As our parting toast shall be—
That our bones may rest in our country's
Our souls in her memory!

Chorus—Wine, wine, &

So loud and long was the burst of acclamation that followed this characteristic melody, and so completely were all hearts taken up with it, that Bellechassaigne and de Flamarin saw their opportunity, and springing forward, so as to cut the party off from their fire-arms, shouted to them to surrender on the instant, or they were all dead men, bidding their own men, at the same time, level their carbines, and take aim, but, although taken by surprise, beset and surrounded, not one of the picquet dreamed of yielding. "Draw your swords, boys," cried the singer, springing to his feet, and unsheathing with one motion his poniard and his rapier. "Draw, and fall on! there be but a score of them," and he was bounding forward to the charge, when a loud shout of laughter, and the cry, "Friends! Turenne! Turenne!" arrested them, and all was for a few minutes loud and wild confusion; but when this ceased, "You keep good watch," exclaimed de Flamarin, "and lucky it is for ye, that we were not the rounds; as it is, ye are mulcted

in a flask of wine, which we will discuss presently, and then to horse again, but, if you will take my advice, you will detach some two or three videttes, for I esteem it very like that some of the generals will go the circuit of the posts between this time and morning!"

"You're in the right of it there," answered the captain of the party, "so, Mainwaring and Digby, take up your carbines and be off and post yourselves a hundred yards apart, down the hill side; I will relieve you in an hour, here is the wine, but will you not sit down and join us?"

"No! no! we must away, else worse will come of it," Bellechassaigne made reply, "so here's to your good health, fair comrades, and a light watch to ye, and may ye 'scape the provost marshal, as well as we have done, Wyvil and I; for, by my life, I hoped for nothing better than to be shot to-morrow morning!"

"Well, if you had been," answered De Flamarin, laughing, "that were a better fate

than the soothsayer foretold me at the siege of Etampes."

"Why, what was that, De Flamarin?" asked one of the English cavaliers.

"Oh! that I should die with a rope about my neck," he replied, laughing.*

"By St. George! but that's pleasant," exclaimed one.

"Yes; and probable, too," answered Bellechassaigne, "when he has the privilege of decapitation in right of his nobility."

"A mighty pretty privilege that, on my honour," replied an Irish trooper of the regiment of Clare. "That's a prerogative

* This prediction was actually made, and verified by the fact, that Monsieur De Flamarin fell, shot through the body, in the severe action of July 2, 1652, under the walls of Paris, and that some soldiers of Condé, who were defending a fortified house near the spot, saw him struck down, and wishing to despoil him of his rich clothes, cast a rope with a slip-knot over his head to drag him into the building. He died in that situation." —*Mémoires Relatifs à la Revolution d'Angleterre* Jacques II., tome xxii., p. 145.

now, I'd not be over anxious to be earning; but, praise be to the saints, for that same! they can't make me out to be noble any way!"

And in the shout of laughter which chorused this naïve observation, the others mounted and rode away; and without any more adventures, made their way safely to head-quarters.

Several days elapsed after this without the occurrence of any event of importance; Wyvil and Bellechassaigne having rejoined the corps to which they were attached, and quietly resumed their duties, no notice being taken whatsoever of their conduct, either by the marêchal in person, or by their own immediate superiors.

The court, meanwhile, was at St. Denis, the citizens of the metropolis divided among themselves, and pretty equally balanced between the causes of the cardinal and princes, holding themselves in a sort of disaffected neutrality, with their gates closed, and refusing ingress to either party; and

it was soon understood by the gentlemen, whom her decided and impetuous activity had preserved from the disgrace of a court-martial, that Isabella Oswald was in attendance there on the queen-mother, Anne of Austria.

Thus, for some days, no intercourse could possibly take place between the English cavalier and the lady, in behalf of whom his heart was hourly declining from its allegiance to another. This fact, however, as often is the case, in the commencement at least of attachments, before the first romance of incipient passion has been dissipated by too familiar intercourse, tended, as it would seem, only to fix the wavering mind of the young soldier more steadily upon the wild, high-spirited, and headstrong beauty, whose every charm was seen through the misty veil which absence casts over remembrance, exaggerating, like the haze of the spectral Brocken, in proportion as it renders indistinct, the outlines of whatever it enshrines in its poetical and visionary

folds. Day after day, the more he shunned his comrades, wrapping his soul in deep abstraction, and giving every minute he could spare from his military duties, to wild and whirling fantasies.

It must not be imagined yet, that no thought of the fair and gentle being, to whom he had now begun to meditate such foul disloyalty, ever intruded on his waking dreams—for it was to no lack of kind or honourable impulses, but to want of steadiness, of direct persevering energy, of overruling principle, that the defection of the young man was attributable.

In the earlier moments of his new fascination, the sweet, calm face of Alice would constantly recur to his mind, and as often as it did so, the pure and maidenly loveliness of her character, its truthfulness, its absolute neglect of self, its charity toward the faults of others, and above all, its feminine devotedness of love toward himself smote deeply on his repnetant spirit. But, alas for human nature! too true it is, that

ıen once we have admitted evil thoughts
be our counsellors—when we have once
ened to the voice of the charmer—who,
s! ever charms too wisely—unless we
ıish the dark spirit instantly, by one
ong effort, so that he never shall return
ıll—the pleadings of the conscience wax
ıker still at every iteration, till they are
wned wholly by the triumphant tongue
passion—the whispers of the false one,
om we have suffered to become the
ond time a visitant, recur more fre-
ntly, and gain strength at each recurrence,
il he has become the lord and tyrant of
bosoms.

And so it was with Wyvil. He was
ı his birth upward pre-eminently sub-
to that "one touch of nature," which,
he great poet of the human heart has
ttén,

Makes the whole world kin—
ıat all with one consent praise new-born gauds,
ough they are made and moulded of things past,
ıd give to dust that is a little gilt,
ore laud than gilt o'erdusted.

To this he owed it, in the first place, that he became so readily, although so worthily enamoured of Alice Selby—to this he owed it too, that when she was afar, and a fresh "Cynthia of the minute" was brought upon the stage, his "present eye" was prompt upon the instant "to praise the present object." Moreover, so unsteady was the right principle within him, so little had he of the stern obstinate determination to do well, let what may come of it, that though his good impulses at first leaped out unbidden to do battle for the absent, he yet repelled the tempter with so little energy in the first onset, and suffered him so soon to make another, and another charge, that almost ere he knew it, the lodgment was effected, and the old garrison expelled, now in its turn to attack, but as faint and ineffectual antagonists, the citadel which had so treacherously yielded.

It had by this time, therefore, come to pass, that although thoughts of Alice Selby would still at times sweep back to his false

eart, they were now thrust aside by a men-
al effort, as most unwelcome and intrusive
isiters; for the voice of remonstrance,
ever too welcome to humanity, when it has
een once hushed, though it may rouse itself
gain and again, is listened to each time
ith less attention—greater reluctance—till
he object itself, which gives rise to the self-
eproach, becomes, by association of itself,
ateful and repulsive. Through all these
rocesses, then, had the mind of Wyvil
assed, since the day on which he had so
ccidentally assisted Isabella Oswald. From
aving his soul full of remembrance, and of
ch affection for Alice Selby, as he was ca-
able of feeling—with now and then a
range and passing thought of Isabella in-
uding itself, and repulsed faintly—he had
me to ponder all day long on the charms
d perfections of the latter; on the chances
winning so bright and beautiful a prize,
d on the means of recommending himself
e most effectually to her favour; while if

the half-reproachful face of Alice was summoned for a moment by his guilty conscience, to look into his very eyes, it was dismissed at once by the most vigorous and resolute exertion of volition.

Yet even when this was the case, it could not have been said of him truly, that he had resolved to aim at gaining Isabella's love, or to act with base treachery to Alice. The fact was simply this—that he was too indolent, too irresolute of mind to determine any thing—that he left himself voluntarily, like a boat cast on the billows, oarless and rudderless, to float which way soever the stormy winds of passion, or the capricious tides of fortune, should waft him devious on the sea of life. He had thus far become a traitor—that he had willingly permitted treason to grow into the continual and licensed subject of his meditations. And who is he of mortals, that having once admitted the evil one to be the guide of his steps, the prompter of his secret thoughts, can say to him, "Thus

far shalt thou direct my footsteps, thus far shalt thou advise my soul—thus far—thus only?"

Several days elapsed, and the troops of Turenne halted inactive at Villeneuve; but this pause of seeming indecision was destined to be but of short duration; for the great leader having learned that beyond doubt the Duke of Lorraine had retired beyond the frontiers, determined to resume the offensive, and act against the Prince of Condé, the only enemy now in the field against him, with vigorous decision. Accordingly he broke up his encampment on the 21st day of June, and marching north-easterly by slow degrees to Lagny, he there crossed the Marne; and, turning westward thence, arrived on the 2d of July, and encamped at La Chevrette, a little village about a league distant from St. Denis on the east side of the Seine; the Prince of Condé, who had vainly quitted Etampes in the hope of effecting a junction with Lorraine, being posted a little higher up the river, on

the opposite side, at St. Cloud. Both armies now prepared in earnest for a general action; for on the very day of his arrival, Turenne began to bridge the Seine in several places, which is here very wide, and interspersed with islands, and Condé hastened to oppose him.

Continual skirmishes and constant cannonading now took place, and every opportunity that could be fancied was afforded for deeds of desperate and daring partisanship; and, what would seem most strange in these days, but was then deemed nothing unusual or remarkable, the residence of the court being so near the scene of action, parties of gay non-combatants were constantly made up to ride or drive down to the eminences overlooking the scene of strife; so that scarcely an hour of the day passed without some gorgeous cavalcade, with gilded carriages and bright liveries, and even ladies of high rank among the number, being seen literally in the line of fire; while it was scarcely a less singular feature of the times

that in the middle of a war of rebellion and civil discord, all extreme points of courtesy were insisted upon with the minutest etiquette; so that in fact there was little danger to the fair and gay amateurs, except from a chance shot or spent ball, which would now and then come ricochetting through the dust, and set them all a scampering.

It will be readily imagined that, with a field like this before them, such men as Bellechassaigne and Wyvil were constantly devising some new deed of daring; vying with one another in every sort of hazardous and wild excitement, and setting all the young spirits of both armies in a flame with martial rivalry. Day by day, night by night, sometimes together, but oftener apart, they were for ever in the saddle—now cutting off a convoy, now capturing a picket, now making a general officer in his own quarters prisoner, and carrying him off by surprise, till every eye was fixed upon them in astonishment and admiration. Several

times while engaged in scouring the country in search of some adventure, Marmaduke had encountered Isabella, riding upon her fiery English horse, to the envy and surprise of the Parisian dames, escorted by her father, and surrounded ever by the noblest and most fashionable idlers of the court; but though no opportunity was given for more than a passing glance and hasty salutation—for Wyvil was at all times upon duty—still so deep was the blush that still accompanied the lady's greeting, so marked and speaking was the glance that seemed to linger on her features, that he could scarcely doubt but he had awakened something of interest already in her bosom; that he was stirred to aim at some higher token of regard by wilder and more desperate exploits.

Meantime Turenne, whose working parties had been much annoyed by the interruption of the enemy, posted the two foot regiments of La Ferté on an island in the river, somewhat more elevated than the opposite shore, to the point of which the bridge was in process of construction, and by this able

vement prevented the light troops of
dé from harassing his workers, hand to
d, as they had done in the first instance.
great was the advantage which the
lists gained by this disposition, that, on
following morning, the princes seemed
osed to make a general attack, several
y corps of foot having been seen at an
y hour moving with horse and cannon
ard the point in question.

was as beautiful a morning as could be
gined—the country all arrayed in the
est green of summer; the fields ena-
ed with ten thousand wild flowers, that
umed every breath of the soft, mild,
wind; the bright sun laughing out of the
e skies, and filling all the earth and air
warmth and lustre. The scene, too,
of the most delightful; the meadow-
ks of the blue Seine, with sloping
nences, wood-crowned, and decked with
ging vineyards on either hand; and all
rich and cultivated champaigns, with
dreds of white villages, and here and

there the grand and massive towers of palaces and abbayes, lying stretched out, broad, bright, and beautiful, to the far distance; while to the left-hand of the gorgeous landscape loomed up the dark magnificence of the metropolis, with all its piles of antique masonry. What wonder, then, that all the gay court insects were abroad, to gaze upon the pageantry and pomp of the approaching conflict.

In a small meadow near the bridge, sat Turenne on his charger, surrounded by his staff, calmly observing the advancement of his works, and the movements of the approaching enemy; before him, to the left-hand, lay the island, occupied by the infantry of La Ferté, with their bright armour and tall standards; behind him on a little eminence commanding the river and part of the opposite banks, was a long line of cannon, with the artillerymen and cannoneers busily pointing them upon the heads of the enemy's advance; and in the low fields to his right, many small bands of horse were

wheeling to and fro, distinguished from each other by many-coloured scarfs and fluttering cornets, and the gay cassocks of their partisan commanders.

The mass of the royal army was, for the most part, concealed by the low range of hills, on which the cannon were disposed, although the heads of their pikes glittering in the sunshine, and the tops of their ensigns shining above the trees and hedges, showed that they were in force, and close at hand should they be needed; while, to complete the picture, scarcely a pistol-shot behind the cannon of the royalists, three of the king's carriages were stationed, with their bright train of liveried attendants, and magnificently apparelled courtiers, among whom were pre-eminent the distinguished forms of Sir Henry Oswald, and his unrivalled daughter.

Two or three shots had been fired from the royal cannon, which, though they had done no real damage, had already checked the advance of the prince's columns; for

these had not been supported by artillery, so that it began to appear doubtful whether any thing of consequence would take place that day; and the fair amateurs were even beginning to display some such feelings as would be now called forth by the non-appearance on the stage of some popular tragedian, whose announcement had called them thither—when suddenly a small party of perhaps two hundred fantassins, rushed down from the main body with such rapidity, as set at nought the fire of the artillery, which opened on them furiously as they came, and took up a position behind the brow of a little sloping hill, which sheltered them entirely from cannon-shot. It evidently was impossible to drive them from that post by any missiles then in use; for although bomb-shells had been introduced in the attack of towns, the management of mortars was so little understood, that hardly any aim could be taken; and this was the more to be regretted that they kept up so terrible a fire on the regiments, which held

the island, not being above a hundred yards from the river-bank, that the men might be seen falling by scores at every volley from their unseen assailants; and that the working parties instantly ran in, unable to sustain the constant and well-aimed discharge.

Meantime, a dozen squadrons of dragoons moved down, and drew themselves up in line of battle, a little way in the rear of the fantassins; while several regiments of foot came winding down a hollow way to the left, as if with the intent to cross over to the island, under the cover of their ambushed tirailleurs. The brow of Turenne grew dark as night; and in a moment a cavalier went at full gallop from his side to the artillerymen, who instantly commenced a furious cannonade upon the horse in the rear, which were exposed to their fire, and within half-an hour, forced them to fall back to a mile's distance; although they did so most reluctantly, making two or three different attempts to rally at successive intervals, and losing nearly a third of their number before they

gave up the point. Still the foot-soldiers continued undisturbed behind the hill, and poured their balls in an incessant stream of quick-glancing fire into the dense ranks of La Ferté, which had no means of returning the discharge by which they were such cruel sufferers. For this there seemed no remedy; and now the marêchal was on the point of sending an order to the relics of those regiments, to abandon the island, until such time as he could erect breast-works during the night to cover them, when, on a sudden, one of the troops, which had been mentioned as wheeling to and fro the meadows on the right, like birds of prey seeking an opportunity to swoop, came up at a light canter to the general's station.

This little handful, for in truth it was no more, consisted but of fifty men besides their leader; but they were mounted, one and all, on fine gray horses, with head-pieces and corslets of clear polished steel; and were distinguished from all other parties of the kind, as well by the exquisite finish of

r whole equipment, as by their parti-
ured plumes and scarfs, which, like the
et that waved over them, were sin-
rly blended of bright blue and yellow,
n fringes and embroidery of silver.

he officer who led them, was a tall,
der youth, with a profusion of light
s falling down from beneath his helmet,
a buff coat, superbly laced with silver,
ead of a cuirass, crossed by a silken
ric of the same colours as those borne
is retainers.

he cloud passed partially away from the
of the marêchal, as he observed the
ement of this party, and he even told
orderly, whom he was just despatching
e regiments of La Ferté, to await fur-
orders, observing with a half smile
e Duke of York, who stood beside

Now then, I fancy we shall have some
ge proposition from yon dare-devil—
gh what it can be is beyond my guess—
islodge those accursed fantassins, who

are playing havoc with our men yonder. By heaven! if he succeeds, it shall go hard with me, but I will have amends made to him, where best he'll value it. Let us hear what he has got to say, duke."

And as he spoke, he moved his horse a little way from his staff to meet the partisan; while a loud murmur of applause, not unlike that which often greets a favourite actor, rose from the concourse of spectators; who seemed to anticipate some high gratification, from one so much renowned already for his extravagant and dashing valour.

Halting his band at some short distance, the young man rode up to the marêchal, and humbly asked permission to swim across the river with his men, and bring away the marksmen, who were so much annoying the infantry upon the island.

"Bring them away, Captain Wyvil!" exclaimed Turenne. "I am sure I shall be much obliged to you if you will; but for my life I cannot see how you will set about it."

"There is a large bark there, your excellency," answered Marmaduke, pointing to a little cove on the opposite side, where a vessel of some five and twenty tons was moored to a rude dock; "my head upon it that we bring them, if you will but permit the guns to cover us as we return."

"Well, sir," returned the marêchal, "I give you my permission—the guns shall open, as soon as you turn back towards the shore. See to that, will you, Dumont," he added, looking to a young subaltern of his staff, who rode away to the cannoniers immediately.

Wyvil bowed low, and looked much gratified as he received the answer of Turenne; and instantly, having rejoined his men, addressed a few words to them, which they received with a loud cheer, and put their horses to a hand-gallop; while all the *cortège* on the hill began to move down nearer to the river, in the anticipation of some animated spectacle.

Nor were they disappointed; for, just as

his band began to gallop, Wyvil dashed to their head, and seizing his cornet from the hands of the bearer, led them at a tremendous pace across the meadow to a spot where the bank shelved gradually to the river, showing a hard and gravelly soil. It scarcely seemed a moment before he reached the brink, and giving his good horse the spur was in deep water, his troopers setting up another loud cheer, as he rose from the stream, which had at first almost ingulfed him, and following without a second's hesitation.

The river was both broad and deep; and, though not swift, the current swept along in dark and turbid eddies, and it required the utmost strength and skill in horse and rider, to stem its powerful tide—yet not one charger failed—not one trooper faltered! The regiments upon the island, now seeing the intention of the movement, set up the cry of France, known for so many ages—their cry upon the battle-plain, or at the festive board, in the extremity of peril,

in their height of rapture—"Vive le
i! Vive le roi!" and the heart-stirring,
ep hurrah of the few English cavaliers
sponded to the mighty acclamation with
ld and dauntless greeting.*

Luckily for the little troop, the very ele-
tion of the ground, which sheltered the
ntassins of the enemy, prevented them
m aiming at the daring swimmers; and
en the cavalry of Condé, who, being on
e upper ground, saw what was concealed
the sloping banks from the skirmishers,
ce more attempted to move down, the
yal cannon again belched forth, through
me and volumed smoke-wreaths, their hail
iron bullets, and scattered them in wild
nfusion.

Heavily the white clouds swept down,
d curtained for a moment the bright
ine, and shut off the scene of action from
e anxious eyes that gazed on it. They

* For the reality of this exploit see *Mémoires Re-
ifs à la Revolution d'Angleterre.* Jacques II., tome
o. 113.

cleared away, and lo! Wyvil had landed safely—had formed his men upon the hostile bank—and was in the act of charging with his battle-cry and trumpet-note the surprised and dismayed fantassins.

Furious and loud now waxed the cheering from the island, while from that little troop, the clash of blades on morion and corslet, and pistol-shots, glancing among the *mêlée*, made meet accompaniment to that fierce stormy chorus. But the affair was ended in a moment—taken entirely by surprise, cut down, and trampled underfoot, their leader killed, and their position forced, the skirmishers threw down their weapons, and surrendered. Five minutes more saw them embarked in the sloop under a fitting guard—the mooring-ropes cut—and the vessel drifting with sail and oar toward the other bank—while, without losing horse or man, the gallant partisan swam back, among the redoubled plaudits of his party, uninjured and in triumph.

As he relanded, the marêchal rode down himself to meet and thank him, at the head of his whole staff; and, having done so, ordered a dozen field-pieces to be passed over, together with a company of engineers, who should entrench the island, in the same bark which had brought over the fantassins.

But yet another and a higher gratification awaited the ambitious partisan; for, as he wheeled his men back to their quarters, he met the royal cavalcade returning to St. Denis. Many a high encomium was passed upon his conduct by tongues not wont to commend lightly—many a glance and smile were flashed on him from eyes and lips that rarely gleamed or melted but for the mighty and renowned. But one soft sigh was faltered forth, which went more deeply to his soul, than all the eulogies of chiefs and princes—one humid speaking beam was shot from an eye half averted, that thrilled his heart more hurriedly than all the fascinations of all those gay court beauties.

The cavalcade swept onward — but as they passed, there fell at Wyvil's feet a lady's kerchief, of pale lilac, with a broad gold border—from out ten thousand the eye of Marmaduke would have discovered it, and sworn to its transcendant owner—thenceforth he wore that kerchief knotted upon his arm — that owner enthroned nighest his seat of life! From that time forth, whatever he had been before, Wyvil was false to Alice.

CHAPTER XII.

Months had elapsed since Marmaduke effected his escape, and every thing at Woolverton, except the thoughts of Alice Selby, had fallen back into their customary old routine. Winter with its keen frosts and driving snow-storms, diversified by long slow sloppy thaws, and dark gray fogs, had come and gone ; and spring had clothed the woods with fresh green foliage, and called the wild flowers into life, and waked the wild birds into song; and summer had succeeded with its mature and glowing flush of noonday beauty; yet no news had arrived of Marma-

duke, his whereabout, or his well doing; nor had the pedler Bartram been seen or heard of in the neighbourhood since the tempestuous night whereon he accompanied the cavalier in his flight toward the sea shore.

One thing had occurred only that could be supposed to have any reference to the subject, which, it may be believed, was ever uppermost in the disturbed and anxious mind of Alice. A few days after Christmas a strolling mercer had left a little parcel at the lodge, addressed to Mistress Alice Selby, Woolverton Hall, near Worcester, accompanied by a mere verbal message "that it contained the goods which had been paid for in the autumn." This, when it was opened, not without many a surmise as to its contents—for no one could remember that any thing had been ordered, much less paid for in advance—was found to enclose a dozen pair of French kid gloves superbly fringed with silver and embroidered with rare skill

according to the fashion of the day. No note, however, accompanied the gift, for such it evidently was; nor was there any clue by which so much as to guess at the giver; but on a closer examination Alice discovered that, contrary to what was usual, every glove bore the same device, a bird folding its wings as if just alighted, under the shelter of a tuft of lilies, with this refrain, or posy, as it was vulgarly denominated—

Sauf a l'abri
Du fleur de Lis.

It flashed upon her, therefore, instantly that this must be intended as an intimation that her lover had made good his escape, and was now in security under the protection of France, as indicated by the chosen emblem of its ruling race. There could indeed be little doubt that this was indeed the case; and when the vigilant and jealous system of espionage continually exercised in every thing regarding intercourse with France, under the present government, was taken into con-

sideration, the delicacy and skill by which this morsel of intelligence was transmitted, in such a manner that it should not awaken the most remote suspicion, could hardly be enough admired.

For a short time the heart of Alice was relieved of care, and she lived, as it might be said, from day to day in the hope and confidence that she should ere long have the pleasure of receiving full and sufficient tidings of him whom she almost regarded as her husband. But when month after month lagged on, and no news came, although she learned at times that other persons throughout England received tidings from their royalist friends and relations in the neighbouring kingdom, a cold and heavy feeling of despondency, mingled with apprehension, settled down a fixed and grievous weight on her young spirits. She could not, though she strove against the thought which still, as often as she repressed it, rose spectre-like before her; she could not but believe that she was deserted—that she had never been

loved as she had loved herself, with the whole deep interminable fondness of a sincere and single heart—and that now, in the first brief absence, the first small separation, which even with the most fanciful and fickle liking is wont to add, rather than to detract, something of deeper interest and romance, she was already overlooked, forgotten, and betrayed.

Brighter hopes would indeed at times break in, and with that beautiful and holy trustfulness which forms so exquisite a feature in the pure love of woman, she would frame many an excuse, and fancy many a reason for her lover's silence; and at times would reproach herself for doubting, even momentarily, the faith and honour of him she devotedly adored. Yet still month after month the adverse feeling grew more palpably and strongly on her reason, until at length it was so firmly rooted, that she would almost have been more surprised to learn that he was faithful, than that he had

already broken his plighted faith and violated his allegiance.

Well was it then for Alice Selby, that, though her whole soft nature was imbued with even more than all a woman's tenderness and delicate retiring sweetness, there was yet in her untried soul a deep spring of resolved and patient firmness, a never-failing source of self-sustaining, humble, pure religion — it was well for her that she had learned even in the young days of her all-joyous unmixed happiness, to raise her thoughts and hopes above this transitory scene, and fixed her heart on high, on those far mansions, where sorrow never comes, nor sin, nor suffering.

It was well for her! for by that patient firmness, and in that high religious hope, that longing after something happier far, and holier and more exalted than can be looked for here, she was enabled to endure her trials, nor to endure them only, but to smile even when her pangs were keenest,

and to be herself happy in the performance of her duties, and in diffusing happiness around her.

There were not, it is true, so many nor such radiant smiles on her bright face; there was not such a mirthful and continual sunshine as had been wont to beam from all her sparkling features; there was not such a bounding and elastic joy as used to manifest itself in every motion of her light fairy frame. She fed her birds as fondly, tended her flowers as sedulously as of old, but there was something in her every act and movement that showed as if her feelings, those even which were the most pleasurable, had lost a part of their intensity—as if, to her perception, the earth had lost a glory!

One pleasure, one alone, not only seemed to have remained unblighted amid the desolation of the rest, but to have gained a fresh zest and vigour—the pleasure of administering to the wants, and comforting the sorrows of the poor, the aged, and the sick. Always, even from her childhood upward, the eyes

of many a sad bedridden sufferer had brightened at the gentle sound of her light footstep; always the needy and the woful had been accustomed to look not in vain for the aid of her bounteous hand, the comfort of her low soft voice. Always, for miles around her quiet and unostentatious home, the prayers of the grateful peasantry had been wont to call down blessings on her outcomings and ingoings. But now more frequently than ever her footsteps might be traced among the sad and sordid haunts of rustic want and woe—more frequently might she have been found sitting by the bedside of the fevered cottager, assuaging by kind promises the parting agonies of some sad dying mother of fatherless and helpless babes; or soothing the impatient griefs of wayward orphans.

There was a deeper pathos in the tones of her most musical voice as she read out the beatific promises of Holy Writ beside the deathbed of some penitent sinner; a sadder, yet a holier meaning in her smile, as she

wiped off the tear-drop from the cheek of some forsaken maid, and pointed, as her surest consolation, the comforts of the day-spring from on high. It was not that she entertained so vain a thought as that these things should be imputed unto her for righteousness above—it was not that she nursed a hope so ruinous or so delusive, as that by this mere exercise of actual duties, she could bribe Heaven to favour her weak wishes. Oh, no,—she was too well taught in the truths of that which is indeed the Book of Life; she knew too well the imperfection of all human virtue, the inutility of aught, save faith and humbleness of heart, and deep contrition, to fall even for a moment into so wild an error. No! it was rather that, as she came herself to learn the fickleness of every human fortune, the fallacy of every human hope, her bosom yearned the more toward those who sorrowed, and there was none to comfort them.

Her father, although he was busied in his beloved classics, with almost all his mind

abstracted and engrossed in bookish meditations, was not so perfectly inapprehensive as to notice nothing of what was passing in his sweet child's mind; nor yet so ignorant of the world's wisdom as to deny the justice of her solicitudes and fears; but, though he saw and understood the whole, and sympathized with all her sorrows, and trembled for her fate, there could not perhaps have been chosen a less fitting counsellor, or a less apt consoler than Mark Selby. Himself, a man originally of deep and overflowing passions, yet at the same time even from his youth a secluded scholar, having set all his happiness upon a single cast, and in the death of his beloved wife, having lost that all by a single blow, despite his wisdom, his philosophy, his Christian fortitude, he had been able to discover no better remedy for his incessant grief, than to shut himself up apart from all his friends among the very scenes that most recalled it to his spirit, than to brood over it in solitude and silence, till it had come to be the sole companion of his life, unfitting him

for all exertion, and setting, as it were, "a great gulf" between him and the ordinary cares and pleasures of mankind.

It is true that at times, under the sudden stimulus of some exciting circumstance, he could be roused from his stupor, and even spurned to energetic action and quick thought; but with the emergency, the brief spirit, to which it had given birth, passed away likewise, and left him as before, the listless and unworldly student. This present grief was not, however, in any sort one of those which could operate to arouse him, lacking as it did any of that suddenness, which seemed alone to stir him, caused as it was rather by the cumulative evidence of many slight and almost imperceptible circumstances, than to any one striking or important incident.

Thus though the old man would sometimes wonder that no tidings should arrive from Wyvil, and sometimes in his secret soul doubt the sincerity of his affection for his child, he would relapse almost imme-

diately into forgetfulness, and hardl
recollect that the events had take
all, which had exerted such strong
on the peace of his domestic circle
times, indeed, he would appear t
the unwonted silence, not to say
of his sweet daughter's manner;
he would gaze at her wistfully as
his side engaged in some graceful
occupation, with downcast eyes, a
usual air of placid calmness shad
expressive features; and as the
conviction would steal upon him,
same fatal blight had smitten th
heart which had converted his c
to ruined desolation, a tear woul
his withered cheek, and he would
thin white locks in hopeless re
Yet he dreamed not of altering hi
life, of interrupting his secluded
seeking for a change of associat
change of company or scene, in
more than he had done in his ow
be that he knew not the efficacy of

causes to "raze from the brain a rooted sorrow;" or if he knew he had lost the energy to practise it; so he left her to brood over her sorrows, even as he had done himself; and if the result did not prove the same, it was that the girl's mind was framed of sterner stuff than the philosopher's, and the girl's lore derived from a far deeper source of wisdom than the schools of the Stoic or the Stagyrite.

Months had elapsed, and it was now the very height of summer; the birds, which had filled all the woods and fields with joyful song a few weeks earlier in the season, were now all hushed and voiceless; but, as if to compensate for this, the air was vocal with the hum of myriads of bright insects, and perfumed by the odours of unnumbered flowers. It was a glorious morning in the first week of August; the heavy dew which had fallen nightly for some weeks, indicating by its presence the very loveliest of summer weather, was hardly yet evaporated from leaf and flower; and tempted by the fresh cool-

ness of the hour, Alice was wandering among her parterres, now one rich blush of many-coloured roses, when she was disturbed from her pleasant task by the light sound of an approaching footstep. Looking up quickly from the bush which she was trimming, she recognised at once the form and features of Marian Rainsford, the gentle widow of the village inn, and advancing a step or two to meet her,

"Ah! Marian," she exclaimed, "I am glad to see you; but I hope nothing is amiss at the Stag's Head to bring you abroad so early. How is your mother? and how has she fared these two days?"

"Better, I thank your kindness, Mistress Alice," replied the pale fair widow, in answer to Alice's last words. "I think she is something better, though there has been very little change in her since our poor Martin was taken from us. She felt it as a sad shock, and never has been able to look on it, as I do, in the light of a most merciful and blessed release—for surely he had no en-

joyment beyond the mere sense of existence; and, as you know, dear lady, after that terrible night when the young cavalier escaped, he never was himself at all, but relapsed ever from one wild fit into another. Oh! lady, I am certain some dark mysterious event befel that night, of which nor you nor I know any thing at all; and if I ask Frank Norman, or honest Master Sherlock, they only shake their heads, and make no answer. But I am wasting time, and forgetting that, I came for. I much fear there is something wrong, though I cannot tell what. Last night a pedler-man put up at the Stag's Head, whom I once saw a year or two ago with Master Bartram; and all the evening long he seemed uneasy, and desirous to speak with me apart; but knowing nothing of the man, I kept aloof from him, and I am sorry for it now—for this morning early, an orderly dragoon stopped on his way from London, to take breakfast and refresh his horse, on his way, as he let fall,

with despatches for Major-General Henry, from the Lord-General Cromwell; and when the pedler saw him coming down the lane in the uniform of the Ironsides, he was quite awe-stricken, and besought me to let him out by the little door in the end of the house, and would have left his pack behind if I had not reminded him of it. Well, Mistress Alice, just as I let him out, he told me that he had come down hither to warn you—for that Bartram had been caught at last—and that *he* bade him come down hither. And he said something more about a letter, but I could not distinctly understand, for he spoke very hurriedly and low—but I made out thus much, that there was danger to your house somehow impending, and that his purpose was to warn you—but then he pointed toward the front-door, by which the soldier was just entering, and said it was too late, and fled as quickly as he could up the road, and I saw nothing of him more. But when the trooper had gone on his way, which he

did very soon, and seemingly in much haste likewise, I came up hither to tell you all that I know, but grieved I am to say, that it is all too little."

"I know not, Marian; I know not," answered Alice, thoughtfully, "nor can I even guess what it should mean. Sorry I am to learn that Master Bartram has been taken; but I cannot imagine what evil should arise to us from his arrest. But this man, my good Marian, this pedler, do you know his name? did Bartram ever say that you might trust him?—nay, do you even know who Bartram is himself?"

"No, lady," replied Marian; "I never heard this fellow's name; nor ever saw him, except once, as I have told you. And what is more, so far from Master Bartram telling me to put trust in him, I have no certainty that he himself yielded him any confidence. I have seen Bartram oftentimes consort with men of all conditions, and all politics; and, when he came in with a stranger, none of us ever seemed to know him, unless

he spoke the first. I cannot recollect now, were it for my life, how he behaved that night this man was in his company. I think, however, that they seemed friends, or I should else have thought more of the matter, and so remembered it."

"He might, however, well be a trapan, or wily spy of Cromwell," said Alice, after a moment's musing; "I have heard tell of such things. Was it not young Cholmondeley, of Cholmondeley Royal, who was arrested after he had been concealed, quite safely, for half a year or more, all through discoveries made by a spy, pretending to be a confidential agent? I should not wonder if this were something of the kind; I am almost glad that I did not see him. But, Marian, you have not told me what you know of Bartram."

"No, Mistress Alice," replied Marian, her whole face covered by a deep crimson blush, "I have not told you, and I must not, though I know very well. He is not what he seems, however, but a gentleman of

birth or breeding. You may be just as certain of his faith as if you knew him, as I have done for years."

"Well, Marian," Alice answered, "I do not see that there is any thing to do, or even to consider of, thus far. If there be evil coming, we have no means of judging what it is, much less of averting it at present; all that is left to us is to be patient—if ill there be, sure am I we shall not wait long before we hear of it: and to hear nothing will be to learn that nothing is amiss. One thing I would urge on you, Marian, should this man by and by return, beware of letting him discover that you at all comprehend—but ha! what have we here?" she said, interrupting herself, as the clattering sound of several horses' feet made itself heard upon the gravel-road.

"Upon my word, it is our cousin Chaloner; he has not been here for these many weeks—and he looks grave I think, even at this distance. Nay, Marian, now I fear

that you are right, and that some danger is abroad."

"That do not I, Mistress Alice," answered Marian; "General Henry is not the man to bring ill tidings to his friends, unless he brought withal their remedy."

"Well, we shall soon see; come, Marian, I will go meet him as he passes by the wicket."

And with the words she turned into a long alley, bordered by shrubbery and flowers, across the end of which Chaloner was obliged to pass in order to reach the gates of the hall. But, as if he had anticipated her intention, and was desirous of frustrating it, he put spurs to his horse the moment he saw her turn, and passed the head of the walk at a rapid trot, bowing very low, but wearing no smile on his handsome features, before she had accomplished half the distance.

"There, see you not that—see you not that, Marian? Be sure that he bears some ill news, which he would break to my father

ere he reveal it to me. I will return to the hall, and, riding at that pace, he will be there long ere I reach it. So, farewell—farewell for the present; and pray, believe me, that I thank you much for your kind services. Should any thing occur wherein you can assist me, depend on it, I will send for you."

"I pray you do so, lady," answered the gentle widow; "for we owe you a very heavy debt of gratitude, and I would fain do something, if it were possible, to prove to you that we are not insensible to your great goodness—not for a moment dreaming of repaying you; for that I could not, nor would wish to do, even if I could; but that it is sweet to serve those we love, however humbly. But I will not detain you, Mistress Alice, for I can see by your eye that you are anxious. God bless and keep you, lady, and may all good go with you, as do the prayers of all the poor and sorrowful. Heaven only knows what would come of them, should aught befal the house of Woolverton!"

The tears rose to the eyes of Alice as the fair widow spoke, but she made no reply; for of a truth her heart was too full, and not that only, but a presentiment of evil near at hand hung over her, depressing for the moment all her fine energies and high elastic spirit, so that she dared not speak, lest she should lose her self-control entirely, and burst into a flood of weeping.

Waving a mute answer, she turned and walked rapidly, though with a faltering and uncertain pace, toward the hall, before the doors of which she found the horses of Henry Chaloner in waiting; and many of the servants of the household collected in a bustling and, as it seemed, half apprehensive group, talking in fast, low whispers, and seeming by that strange instinctive intuition, which is so often possessed by servants, to have discovered that matters were not going well with their masters.

"Oh, Mistress Alice!" exclaimed the old butler Jeremy, coming up as fast as he could to meet her, the moment she came

sight, "here is Major-General Henry
loner, closeted with the master this half
r, and they have asked for you thrice,
tress Alice; the park-keeper has gone to
you at the fish-house, and Abraham
sent into the garden—"

Never mind, never mind, good Jeremy,"
answered, quickly, as she hurried past
fearful of being detained by the old
's garrulity. "I am here now; and
aham, and John the park-keeper, will
begrudge the trouble."

Not they, not they, I warrant them,"
rned the steward.

ut, long before he had concluded his
e assurances of the men's willingness
ncur every trouble in her behalf, Alice
vanished up the staircase, and was
ady at the door of her father's study.
re she paused for a moment to collect
agitated thoughts; for her heart beat
and painfully, and her limbs almost
sed to do their office; so certainly did
connect this unexpected visit of her

cousin with the arrival of ill news, which, though she knew not why, she never for a moment doubted to be in some sort identified with Wyvil.

She opened the door with a noiseless hand and entered, and as she saw the countenances of the pair, who sat, with many papers scattered before them on the table, she was assured that her mind had been but too prophetic; for the fine face of Henry Chaloner, so passionless for the most part and calm, bore now strong tokens of inward perturbation, flushing at one time, and the next moment pale as ashes; his voice too was husky, choked, and indistinct, and his eyes swam with tears, which he brushed away every now and then with his gloved hand, as if he were ashamed to be seen weeping.

The features of the old man on the contrary, were much excited; the air of cold and careless abstraction which commonly possessed them, had given way to a high and spirited expression, and there was a

quick and lively glance in his clear eye, a hectic colour on his pale cheek, which Alice had not witnessed there for years.

So quietly had she come in, that neither was aware of her presence, and her father went on speaking, quite unconscious that he was overheard.

"So, as it seems that no choice is left to us, we were better to set off on the instant."

"I fear so," answered Henry, gloomily—"indeed, I fear it must be so; for though this pass of the Lord-General will secure you from all trouble or annoyance on the route, I cannot but be apprehensive that, should the parliament commissioners arrive and find you still here, it might be construed into an act of contumelious malignancy."—

"Well, if it must be so,"—replied the old man—"but it is hard that one so old as I am, so old in honorable years and blameless studies, should be forced to fly from my country, like a thief, or a murderer; and

that for no harm done. But it is not for myself—it is not for myself, Henry!—for I have but a little while, a few months more or less, to wear away in this mortality; and what matters it where one so useless and worn out as I draws his last breath? It is not for myself I feel, Henry; although I had hoped to see my last sun set behind these peaceful trees, and to lie, when this vain world should be lost to me for ever, by *her* side in the long home of my fathers. But, Alice, Alice! oh! but it will be difficult to leave her—as leave her I soon must —far from her native home, and among mere hirelings, without a friend or guardian, and in a foreign land.—Besides she loves so dearly this old place, and all its memories, that it will break her heart to leave it!"—

"No! father, no!"—the sweet girl interposed, taking a forward step that brought her fully into view—"No, no! believe it not!—There is not any thing in all the wide world, that it would break my heart

leave, unless it were to leave you. Oh! , I am quite ready to set forth at once, if be needful—but whither must we go, d wherefore? tell me, I pray you, Cou- n Henry."—

"Grieved to the heart am I to tell you, lice; but told it must be, pain us however uch it may—so nerve yourself, dear ousin, for the worst; for this indeed is l and difficult to hear.—It seems the ped- Bartram—or Colonel George Penrud- ck rather—for such is his real name and tion—for whom the government has been ng strictly watching, as an emissary of the iled family, was taken six nights since, er a desperate resistance, at a small ob- ure tavern in the borough; and when he me to be searched, there was found on s person, concealed within the hollow of staff, a letter, among sundry treasonable pers, from Captain Wyvil to his friend d kinsman in the north, Sir Edmund avassour, detailing accurately his escape om Worcester, his lying hid here in this

house; and even going so far as to describe the very mode by which he was enabled to elude our search, by diving through an opening in the wall of the well into a subterranean chamber—your name and Master Selby's were mentioned at full length, so that there is not any room for denial or disproval, if you had been disposed to make such, which I am sure you are not.—

"Unhappily the papers, some of them having reference to an intended rising in the west, were deemed of such immediate interest that, Cromwell being absent for a few days from town at Hampton Court, they were laid instantly before the council, and by them referred to the parliament, who proceeded without delay to take action on them. Had they been shown to the Lord-General in the first instance, no evil would have come of it; for though he may esteem it necessary to punish heavily seditious plotters, or those who would disturb the constituted powers, he is the last man living to act vindictively, or to wage war

on those who are now living peacably in the land, whatever may be their opinions. A despatch was forwarded to me from him this very morning by relays from the military stations, for he has often heard me speak of you, and knows our kindred, and how dearly I regard your welfare. Warrants, he tells me, have been issued for your and your father's apprehension—the penalty, you know, for the harbouring and resetting proclaimed traitors, is death, Alice—but that he has himself taken means to delay the messengers. He has sent his sign manual, by which you may pass everywhere throughout the realm, and sail from any port unquestioned; he urges it upon me to prevail on you to set off instantly for France.

"He tells me in so many words, that had he learned these matters in due season, no peril should have come of them to you, or any of your kindred; but if you be once taken, he cannot, for state reasons, which it is needless now to name, well interfere to save you. Further than this, all will go

well. Sequestrated your estates must be; but Cromwell has given me his written promise, that they shall be made over to me in perpetuity, and in my own power. I need not therefore say, that I shall hold them as your steward, remitting the rents to you wherever you may be, and looking to the welfare of your tenants and poor pensioners as you would were you present. For the rest there is little doubt—or I might well say, none—that the whole of this trouble will be reduced at last to a few months sojourn in France, for a free pardon will be granted to you easily, after the first excitement of the business shall have died away, you living quietly in the meantime, as you will doubtless do, and taking no part in the angry politics of the day."

"Is that all, Cousin Henry," replied Alice, feigning a pleasure which she was very far from feeling, and mastering her own feelings, so as to induce her father to more self-control. "Is that all that has made you and my father look so gravely? A few months'

absence only on the Continent? I have longed ever to visit *la belle France*, and here it seems is a self-made opportunity; a little hurried, it is true, but the more haste the more excitement. You were best order the coach round at once, dear father. My girl will pack up a few things in half an hour. We will take Margaret along with us, and Charles and Gregory on horseback, and two or three of the other men can ride on the road before us, and lead relays, so we can drive to Bristol with our own horses—that will be the best way, will it not, cousin?"

"I think it will," he answered, smiling sadly—"you are quite a general, Alice—for that is just the plan I had myself laid down for you. There is a vessel, too, at Bristol, to sail in three days for Boulogne."

"I am glad of it, Henry," she replied; "I am glad of it; when we have any thing to do not altogether pleasant, it is the happiest always when it can be done at once. Now, dearest father, will you not go and speak with Jeremy, and tell him simply that we

are going to France for a little while, and that our cousin Henry will remain in charge while we are absent, and bid him order out the coach, with two relays of led horses."

"God bless you, my beloved child! God bless you! and He will," replied the old man, as he rose sadly and slowly to quit the library, "and He will bless you—God's blessings follow ever such constancy and piety as this! We will dine early, and depart immediately. Chaloner, you will take your last meal with us?"

"And ride with you to Bristol, and see you safe on board, and then returning hither, take order here with all things, that you shall find them all when you return even as you left them."

"When we return—when, Henry?" cried Mark Selby, and his countenance fell as he cast his eyes round him, over his loved books, and the quiet study where he had passed so many years of his secluded, peaceable existence. "But go with me, good

enry, good Henry, go with me, and help
e in these hurried matters."

"Nay, father," answered Alice, "I would
eak with him for a moment; go you, I
ay you, and speak with Jeremy; and he
all join you in a minute. Now, Henry,"
e continued, as her father left the room,
ow, cousin Henry, show me the general's
ter; tell me the worst at once—for this
not the worst that you have told me."

"It is, indeed, Alice," he answered, very
mly. "Nay, it is something worse than
e worst—for Cromwell promises distinctly
grant your father a free pardon if all go
iet for a year—his letter I would show
u but I cannot. He has gained some in-
ligence on matters, which he has misap-
ehended, and drawing false conclusions
m false premises, has written that which
u would be only pained to see—speaking
th confidence of things as soon about to
ppen, which *we* know cannot ever be.
this I will soon disabuse him; and I
l sure that I may even promise you a

pardon likewise, when he shall know the truth.

The eyes of Alice fell as Chaloner uttered these words, and a deep crimson flush covered the whole of her pale features, for she understood very clearly what he meant; and she was not merely pained by seeing that his mind still dwelt upon that which in bygone times had passed between them, and which she had been accustomed to hope was now forgotten; but was embarrassed likewise as to another question which she was desirous of asking, while it was still in her power to do so.

Her cousin, seeming, however, to misapprehend the cause of her agitation, took her affectionately by the hand, and said,

"Do not afflict yourself, I pray, sweet Alice—I would not have alluded to these things at all, could I have helped it. I would not have you misunderstand me for the world—it was necessary that you should know exactly how things stood; that, I

sure you, was the only reason why I oke, not to distress you or myself by king any thoughts of what were better forgotten."

"Oh, Henry!" answered Alice; "it is u that mistake now. It was not that at which made me hesitate; but I was nking how I should put a question to you ich it concerns me much to have directly wered."

'Put it directly then," said Chaloner; at is the wisest always; and, believe me, ce, there is not a question in all the rld, that I would hesitate to answer you the same spirit."

'I believe you; indeed I do, Henry; how ld I do otherwise," replied Alice, "than ieve the least asseveration from lips, that yours, have uttered nothing in a lifetime what is true and noble? and I think too, t you are right in this. Tell me then, in se intercepted papers, was there no letter my father, or myself?"

'None, Alice—" answered the youth—

"none at least that I heard of—
hardly doubt had there been such
General would have named it in h
which is, for him, unusually lo
pious."

"Strange!" she said, "stran
and cruel."

And as she uttered the words
ered for the moment by her
feelings, and half forgetful of
presence, a tear or two stole sil
her soft cheek.

"And base, too! beyond mea
exclaimed Henry Chaloner, yiel
impulsive indignation which it
difficult for him to control, at
rence of injustice; "it was in h
to a third party things that, I *fe*
vealed to him only under pledge
—but which I am *sure* no hono
would have disclosed, even if su
the case."

"Hush! Henry—hush!" she
"I may not hear such things spo

becomes not you to speak them. Be that all as it may, it becomes not one so noble as Henry Chaloner, to speak in aught against the absent, who might have, and most likely has, some good defence to offer were he present. But now, good Henry, go to my father and assist him, I beseech you; and above all, seek to amuse his mind, for I much fear this shock will fall on him even too heavily. I will make some few brief arrangements, and meet you at the noontide meal—till then, God bless you, and farewell!"

CHAPTER XIII.

FAREWELL! farewell! that is a sad word at the best, and full of dark associations. Even when in all fruition of the present, and high anticipation of the future, we leave some spot where we have passed glad days, which is linked to our hearts by golden memories, although perhaps we leave it at the suggestion of our own wishes, and for the furtherance of our own interests, even then there is a sense of indistinct and indefinable melancholy that will overshadow us, clouding our joys, as it were, in the spite of our reason, and mingling our hopes with regret. Even when friends part, light-hearted and

re-free, after some pleasant merry-making,
ne spirit-stirring revel, and part with the
tainty—if alas! aught that pertains to
or humanity can be called certain—of
eting to renew that sweet communion,
v for a little space dissevered, after a few
ef months, or weeks, or perhaps days,
re is still, in every sensitive and thought-
soul, a tender and prophetic gloom, a
lowed sadness, a sprinkling* of that bit-
ess which, rising from the midfount of
pleasures, leaves a sting in the veriest
ers of existence.

What is it then to say "Farewell" to the
e of our birth, to the home of our
dhood, the cradle of our intellect, the
ne of our affections, the temple of our
nories?—to say "Farewell," when we go
n to cross wide seas, and visit foreign
es; to exchange all the sweet and magi-
associations which belong not to any
r word in our land's language, as they
o that one "Home," all the familiarity

* Medio de fonte leporum
rgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angit.

of friends, all the deep love of kindred, for the cold heartless stare of the great world, and the chilling intercourse of strangers? What, when there is no term set to our reluctant wanderings—when there is no time named at which we may once again return to all we prize so far beyond every thing else that the earth circles—when hope herself is silent of the future?

I know not how it is, for it seems to me to be something more than the mere work of fancy, something more real than the imagining of spirits depressed, and saddened, and rendered half-poetical by sorrow—for sorrow is a mighty wakener into life of whatsoever germs of the ideal lurk unsuspected in the soul—I know not how it is, I say, that we never leave any place which we have loved, and shall regret hereafter, but some chance circumstances will occur, some accidents, as painters call them, of light or shadow, or of the time of day, or of the ever-varying seasons, to clothe it in a new and fresher beauty than it has ever worn before; to make it wear a guise rendering it far more difficult to quit without reluctance,

or to think of without regretful memories. At such times it would be a relief if the lovely scenes, wherein our spirits have delighted, were veiled in the gray and ghostly mists of dark November; if the trees, which have budded green and fresh as our young hopes, were like them, sere and cold, and leafless — if the voice of the joyous streamlet were bridled by the ice of winter, the brilliant gardens flowerless, the happy warblers songless—but it is rarely so; we are, for the most part, torn from our pleasures when they are the sweetest, exiled from our homes when they are the loveliest —and so it was now to Mark Selby and his fair daughter.

The gorgeous light of an unclouded afternoon at Midsummer, was clothing the rich woods and grassy lawns in a resplendent robe of golden glory—the air was all alive and vocal with the hum of ten thousand glittering insects—the gardens were one glow of roses, with myriads of bright butterflies fluttering round their perfumed petals—the streams were rippling with a soft melody like woman's laughter—earth, water, air

were redolent of mirth and beauty; and as the slow and ponderous carriage, which conveyed the old man and his daughter from the place of their birth, rolled as it were reluctantly over the smoothly gravelled road, it seemed to Alice as if the grinding wheels were crushing out the joys, the hopes, the very life of her young heart; yet gloriously she bore up, and subdued the almost overwhelming sorrow, and though her sweet eyes swam with tears, and her voice faltered as she spoke, she yet compelled herself to talk hopefully, and almost gaily to the depressed and spirit-broken man, who, utterly prostrated by the shock of this last great calamity, sat by her side, with his gray head bowed upon his knees, and all his senses for the moment paralyzed.

As they passed through the gates, and the old porter with his long white hair uncovered, stood in the ivied porch of the brick lodge, his little grandchildren, Alice's special favourites, smiling and courtesying at his side, while they held back the leaves of the great gate, she almost

ought that life could contain nothing
re of pain or sorrow than she expe-
nced in that passing moment. For who
us, even the wisest, can so much as
am what is in store for him save
th alone, the one sure consequence,
sole immutable, inevitable, offspring of
future? The trifling shock occasioned by
turning of the cumbrous vehicle into the
row lane, beyond the park gates, aroused
rk Selby for a few seconds from his
oor; he looked about him with a long
tful gaze upon the calm green fields
fine old trees, among which he had,
d all his days, had grown up from the
ous prattling child, to whom the whole
ld is but one happy present, to the
l bowed octogenarian, looking from a
past, or to a sudden future—he gazed
h a set meaningless eye on the gray
sgrown roofs of his old home, he thought
ner whom he had brought long years
a happy bride to fill those dim and
nt halls with merriment and glee, who
r a few little years—years that seemed
the retrospect as less than minutes—

had left him more alone than ever; whose very grave he never should see any more—he gazed, until a sudden angle of the park wall, with the thick leafy elms above it, shut off the well-known prospect—then heaving a deep sigh, as if he was half refreshed, "Alice," he said, "it may be, you will see all these again, God grant it; but as for me, I never shall behold them any more. I would have laid me down to my long sleep, this worldly turmoil ended, on the same bed, and under the same roof, which witnessed the commencement of my pilgrimage—I would have slept it out beside her. Nevertheless, not my will be done, but THINE," he added, looking reverently upward, "who never chastenest us but for our own good—never forgetest any one, the humblest of Thy flock."

But Alice could not answer him, nor speak at all, because in truth the very same thought was passing through her own mind; and, when her father echoed it in that prophetic tone which is so frequently adopted by the aged, especially they who

have known many sorrows, she felt that it would be but a species of impiety to attempt any consolation, much more to feign a disbelief which he must know she did not entertain. She looked up, however, with her soft gentle smile in his face, and made an effort; but it was drowned instantly in an abundant flood of tears, the first to which she had given way, that burst forth hot and heavy, yet seemed to relieve the overstrained and aching brain of some portion of its anguish.

"It must be so, my child," resumed the old man, taking her hand in his tremulous and withered fingers. "But do not weep for that. Sooner or later, it must still be so, my own sweet Alice. How painful it may be soever for you to contemplate, we must part at some time or other, and in the course of nature I shall set out the first upon that journey which in his own good time I wait for. The old must pass away, and leave their places to the young, even as the aged oak makes way for the fresh sapling, or the old year expires to give birth to the new. Therefore it is, my girl, that

while I feel quite sure that I shall never again look upon these dear scenes, I have good trust that you may return hither, and pass happy days, where you have given so much happiness to others. Nevertheless, if it be ordered otherwise, we have, I trust, been too well schooled, to murmur or to repine at that which is before us. The world has many a varied scene, and every scene has its own beauty, every station its own phase of happiness. It may be we shall find no landscapes in other lands so lovely to our eyes as these green fields and quiet trees; it must be, that we shall find none so endeared to our memories—but we shall yet have many joys, and much contentment, and above all the cheering confidence that we shall never be forsaken utterly, nor burdened beyond our power to bear. Do not weep, Alice, there may be yet much happiness in store, much more perhaps, than you have known heretofore. One thing is nearly certain, to which you must look forward, I should think, with joyous expectation—"

"Oh! say no more," she exclaimed, "no

ore on that head, father, for I know but
o well what you mean; and I have no
pe at all, no expectation—how should I?
ien all is dark and bitter, and that the
terest of all to which we might have
ked for comfort—I mean that he, he of
men! should have betrayed us."

'But that I do not in the least believe,"
swered her father instantly, and with
ch decision, "Not in the least, Alice.
is against all probability—all nature.
rmaduke Wyvil may be light-minded,
ial, fickle—but he cannot be—nay I am
e, he *is* not so heedless of the obligations
a most solemn oath, so wantonly base
dishonest as to betray us without cause
urpose. No! set your mind at ease on
score, Alice. I am an old man, and
wont to form opinions lightly, or when
ave formed such to be mistaken, and I
sure, I was sure from the first, that there
me mistake in this report of Henry's."

You make me happy," answered poor
e, her whole face brightening up with
ly-kindled hope and animation. "Oh,
er, you make me very, very happy.

And do you think that he is indeed true to us, faithful and loyal, as we would wish him? Oh! if you do think so, surely it was most wrong in me to doubt him."

"Whether he love you as he ought to do, my child," replied the old man—"whether his fancy or his heart have ever swerved from you in absence—whether in short he is worthy of such virtues as yours, Alice—I cannot tell, although I do not clearly see why he should not; but I am confident he never wrote to Sir Edmund Vavasour—to any third party—disclosing what he swore never to reveal! All the rest time will make certain, and, in the mean while, I, who am never sanguine, tell you, my dear child, to be hopeful."

"But how can that be? how can that be?" exclaimed she, relapsing into doubt. "Oh no, you *are* too sanguine, father—for how should they know else, when he lay hid—much more the very trick and mode of his escape, when Henry searched the house—a trick of which none living save you, and I, and he, are cognizant? No! father, no! Marmaduke Wyvil must have

written—must have betrayed us! wo is me! he must!"

"He must have written, Alice, but not to Vavasour. He must, as you say, have betrayed us—but it may very well be, he wrote to one or other of us two; and thus, through very reckless inadvertency, but without any guilt, betrayed us. Nay, but I am most sure that we shall find it to be thus."

"I fear me much, you are wrong," answered the poor girl, "for I asked Henry Chaloner if there had been no letters found on Bartram, addressed to either of us, and he made answer 'None! none at least that I heard of'—and he went on to say that, had there been such, he could hardly doubt that the Lord-General would have named it in his despatches."

"Very like, Alice," said he, promptly, "but I do not believe that Cromwell himself had seen the letters. They were it seems immediately submitted to the council, and by them laid before the parliament, and he wrote instantly to Chaloner, so to anticipate the evil. For the whole world, my child, if I believed it possible that he should

be the traitor this would make him, I would not lead you to form hopes, which a few days would crush for ever—but I say hope! hope, Alice, for the best; and sure I am, you will not be deceived. But see, here we have reached the Cross Roads' Inn, and our relay is waiting."

The horses were soon changed, and here as the men, who had brought them, came up to the coach-door, cap in hand, to make their last adieus to their young mistress before returning homeward, a fresh pang was awakened in a bosom that surely needed no new agonies to rack it. The carriage once again rolled onward, and the blunt honest faces, shaded by sincere grief, of those domestic friends, were lost to the eyes of the mournful travellers, and no more words were spoken, father and daughter both relapsing into gloomy silence.

The sun soon set, and darkness covered the skies, and by and by the stars came out on high, and the moon rose, and shed her pure cold light over the lonely wastes through which they journeyed. All night long they drove on, slowly and wearily, to spare their

horses, pausing from time to time to water them at some lone wayside public-house, but hurrying through the market-towns and larger villages as if unwilling to awaken the attention of the country. A little while before sunrise they reached a solitary inn, to which their second relay of horses had been directed to proceed, and here Henry Chaloner, who up to this time had ridden at some distance in the rear, avoiding to intrude upon the sorrows of his friends, came up to the carriage-window, and advised them to alight and repose themselves for some hours, as they were now distant but twenty miles from Bristol, whither there could be no advantage in arriving before nightfall; to this Alice at first objected, wishing to get over the whole journey at once, but she at once assented when Henry pointed out to her that he wished, for the purpose of avoiding suspicion, to send an avant courier to the commandant of the garrison and port, who was well known to him, announcing his arrival with two friends who were about to sail for France, under

the sanction of the Lord-General's sign manual.

"By doing this," he said, "you will escape all disagreeable interference on the part of town officers, and, it is like enough, some painful and impertinent interrogation. Besides," he added, "you cannot go on board before to-morrow night at all events, and you will, I think, be quieter, and therefore more at ease in this little country-place than in the bustling seaport."

This was unanswerable; and, having once alighted, both Alice and her aged relative found themselves so fatigued, and harassed both in mind and body, that after all, they were not sorry to lie down and rest in the neat quiet bedchambers of the little inn; nor did either of them make their reappearance until late in the afternoon, after Chaloner's servant had returned from the town, bearing the greetings of the commandant, and an invitation for his brother officer, with his friends, to take up their abode in the castle, until the ship should sail. Then they were summoned; and, after

a slight meal, partaken of in almost total silence, with the exception of a short conversation on the propriety of accepting or declining Colonel Milbanke's invitation, which was decided by a negative, they again set out upon their road; and the night falling shortly afterward, they entered the place of their destination before the moon was above the horizon, and consequently without seeing any of the romantic scenery which surrounds that prosperous city—a loss which did not seem, however, to be such to the anxious travellers, and which, in truth, never so much as occurred to the mind of either.

That night they slept in Bristol, and oh! the anguish of awakening in a strange place from the forgetfulness of happy sleep, of gradually recovering the consciousness of sorrow, of that half-doubtful state in which the reason seems to waver—unable to believe, and yet incapable to hope—yet much has been written to no purpose, if any one, who has thus far pursued her fortunes, is not aware that Alice Selby had by this time so perfectly resigned herself to her lot,

so far regained her self-possession and tranquillity, that she descended to the breakfast-table and met her cousin, after one little struggle, arrayed in cheerful and contented smiles, and able to converse on all the topics connected with their situation with absolute composure, and more almost than feminine decision.

On her devolved all the arrangements of their voyage, for the excitement passed, which had aroused her father for a little space, he had fallen back into something even heavier and duller than his usual abstraction; and it was sometimes not without difficulty that his attention could be called to the present strongly enough to obtain an answer to an immediate question. Chaloner lent his aid, however; and before evening all their baggage, with the addition of their carriage and six horses, for these Henry advised her strenuously to take with her, were safely got on board—passports provided—sea-stores laid in—and all things put in train for their departure at an early hour on the morrow. Once in France, it had been determined between Alice and

her cousin, that they should remain at Boulogne-sur-Mer, writing thence to announce what had befallen them to all their friends in Paris, among whom was a certain Marquise de Gondi (a half-sister of Alice Selby's mother, born in a second marriage of her grandfather with a French lady), who had espoused a French nobleman of wealth and distinction, and early left a widow, had continued to reside in the metropolis of France, maintaining always a frequent and most cordial correspondence with her English relatives.

"Were I you, Alice," said Chaloner, continuing a conversation which had engaged them for the greater part of the evening; 'for I can see that all arrangements will depend on your suggestions to your father, I would not move from Boulogne for some time—not certainly until you hear from me, and receive the amount of your father's autumn rental. The rest of your wardrobe, with the books you mentioned to me, and whatever else I may deem needful to you, I will remit forthwith; and when I can find

aught to tell you, I will write, Alice—and you will answer me?"

"Surely I will," said Alice, "and I beseech you to write to me often, for I shall ever yearn to hear from Woolverton. But why should we not go at once to Paris? I am sure Madame de Gondi will be anxious to receive us."

"I am sure she will, Alice, too—yet I advise you strongly not to go as yet. The Court is exiled from the city—living at present, as I learned by the last despatches, at Pontoise—a furious civil war is raging in all the Isle of France, in many parts of Champagne, in Brie, and all the country thence to the Flemish frontier. Monsieur Turenne, it is true, beat the princes in a great battle under the walls of Paris on the fourth of last month, and would have crushed their party utterly, but that the factious citizens admitted the rebels by the gate of St. Antoine, and played the cannon of the Bastille on the king's forces—but we hear that the Spaniards have retaken all the strong places they had lost in Flanders

and elsewhere, and that the Archduke of Lorraine has again entered France with five and twenty thousand men, and is in full march on the capital, hoping there to effect a junction with the Prince of Condé. So you perceive, that, were you to reach Paris now, you would be in the midst of hostile armies; and moreover Madame de Gondi being of the royal party, and all the English cavaliers, who have escaped since Worcester, being engaged on the king's side, you might be possibly exposed to violence from the Frondists, who are strong in the metropolis; and, what is worse, news would be likely to reach England that your father was bestirring himself in French politics, and though *we* know that to be quite impossible, yet in such times as these no rumours are too wild for credence."

"Oh heaven!" said Alice, "and is our lot to be cast once more in the midst of warring armies? is there to be no more peace upon earth for ever, but civil wars, and blood, and parricidal slaughters? Kings trampling on the liberty of subjects, and subjects impiously armed against the majesty

of kings, and sanguinary selfish soldiers lashing both on to wilder madness, prompted by foul self-interest? Is this to be the history of the world henceforth for ever, Henry? for if it be so, I care not how soon I may be where I shall see no more of it."

"He can only reply to you," said Henry, gravely, "to whom all things are known. It may not be denied, however, that matters do look strangely, the world over. The people everywhere, having asserted and regained their rights, which of a certainty were threatened but a little while ago, seem set at present on pulling down the rights of others. How it may end, I know not; but I confess, for one, my confidence is shaken altogether in the self-governing power of the people—they do not possess now, and much I fear they never will possess, equity, honesty, self-knowledge, self-respect, and self-control. I hope, and pray, but I doubt, Alice, of the future. In France, I believe, however, this civil strife is nearly ended; and that soon, for a season, peace will be re-established. Turenne has marched against the Archduke, and, as a soldier, I have little

doubt he will beat him. The Cardinal Mazarin, whose favour with the queen-mother was the chief cause of disaffection, has withdrawn himself into voluntary exile —and altogether I am well of opinion that before two months shall pass all will again be quiet, and the court firmly settled in the Louvre. By that time you will, if you adopt my plan of remaining at Boulogne, have received all your remittances and wardrobe, you will have gained full information concerning this bad business, of which as yet we know so little; and then, if no change shall have occurred permitting you to return home, you can remove to Paris. Should the Marquise solicit your immediate progress to the capital, I think the state of the country, and the vicinity of the armies will be excuse sufficient."

"Oh yes, indeed it will," said Alice, "I would not be again within reach of such occurrences as followed Worcester for all the wealth of France. I will persuade my father to adopt your plans implicitly, and shall hope to hear tidings of all my friends,

both great and humble, at your hands, very often."

"You shall, you shall indeed," he answered; "and you must not be very much surprised if you even see me before very long. There is some talk of sending a fresh envoy to the Hague, and I have been entreated to accept the duty—as yet I know not how it will all end. But it is growing late already, and as you must rise betimes tomorrow, I will now take my leave. Good rest to you, my gentle cousin."

The morning followed soon; the cold gray melancholy morning; and the sad exiles bade farewell to their last friend, and went on board the ship which, its foretopsail set and sailing signals flying, but waited their arrival to get under weigh. To those who have so parted from their native lands, words are unnecessary to recall the cold, dull, stunning agony which paralyzed their very souls as those beloved shores, never perhaps to bless any more the straining eyes that watch them to the last, faded in the far

distance—to those who know not that dread trial, no words could paint it—but may they never know it!—

The wind, though fair, was fresh; and as the good ship left the harbour it freshened more and more, and the sea got up, and the vessel rolled and pitched, and it was well perhaps for Alice, that for a time corporeal suffering effaced the anguish of her spirit; and that no room was given her for contemplation of the past, or imagination of the future, until, a boisterous but rapid transit ended, they lay in safety at the pier head of Boulogne; and then arose new cares, new hopes, new fears, and all the keen excitement consequent on the first sight of a foreign country!

END OF VOL. II.

C. WHITING BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

MARMADUKE WYVIL;

OR,

THE MAID'S REVENGE.

MARMADUKE WYVIL;

OR,

THE MAID'S REVENGE.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

BY HENRY WM. HERBERT, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "OLIVER CROMWELL," &c.

"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

MARMADUKE WYVIL.

CHAPTER I.

THE current of events never stands still; e tide of cause and effect never ebbs, but ll advancing with a flood, equally noiseless d invisible whether it be slow or rapid, ertops the landmarks of the most sage expe- nce, and shakes the bulwarks of the firm- resolution. Still, even in the most eventful riods of the most eventful lives, there will many a pause, many a breathing space seeming quiet, during which it not seldom ppens, that when we deem ourselves most

tranquil and secure in our ignorance of what is passing elsewhere, accidents are actually going on, in places we have never heard of, and among persons we have never seen, which are to alter the whole course and tenour of our lives, and work our happiness or woe.

For wellnigh two months, after their disembarking at Boulogne, nothing apparently occurred, nothing assuredly transpired, that could affect the Selbys either for good or evil. They soon indeed received replies from their Parisian friends, some kind, and warm, and cordial, others as cold, and ungenial as a July hailstone—the kindest from those persons on whom they had the slightest claims, who had least loudly tongued their protestations—the coldest from the most indebted, and the most prodigal of former offers. To this there was but one exception, Madame de Gondi's letters were all that could be wished for or expected, so hospitably anxious to embrace her lovely niece; so strenuous in her delight at offering her a home in her heart of hearts, that she seemed positively to rejoice at the calamities which had enabled her to enjoy her society, and to give scope

all the largeness of her own generous
pirit.

After the first strong pressing invitation,
e was induced, however, to admit the
udence of Henry Chaloner's advice, and to
nsent to their remaining tranquilly in pri-
ate lodgings at Boulogne, until the Court
ould return to Paris, and the war be brought
a conclusion, which all the Royalists now pro-
nesied aloud must ere long be the consequence
Turenne's martial skill. Meanwhile, the life
Alice and her father passed on as stagnantly
can be well imagined. Letters came now
d then from Chaloner, accompanying the
romised bales of books and habiliments, but
ere was little in them of grand or stirring
terest; relating as they did for the most
rt to local matters, to the tenantry, and the poor,
d the household at Woolverton which had been
rmally sequestrated, and granted in due course
law to Chaloner, who hastened to remit
e proceeds of the rents accruing, the chari-
es of the late owners being still continued,
d the establishment kept up almost upon its
ncient footing.

At times, long gossiping epistles would arrive from Madame de Gondi, full of descriptions of the progress of the royal arms, of loyal hopes and exultations, and copious praises of the loyal leaders, among whom more than once poor Alice found enumerated the name of Major Wyvil, as one distinguished far above his fellows for desperate valour, and high conduct. Beyond this, nothing of any kind occurred to disturb the monotonous gloom of the life which they led day after day in the small uninteresting sea-port. A solitary walk upon the cliffs, or on the stripe of yellow sand below them, a wistful straining of the eyes toward the invisible shores beloved, and now and then a drive through the dull environs; these were her only occupations beyond the doors of their cheerless home. Her father, who had fallen back completely into his ancient habits, seemed to be scarcely conscious of the change which had occurred in his fortunes; but, a few of his favourite authors having been forwarded to him by Henry, he read, and wrote, and mused, and methodized in a small dingy chamber in Boulogne, with the same unremitting studiousness which had kept him ensconced for weeks

ogether in his delightful library at Woolverton; nd seemed to be as happy now as he had ever een at any period of his life.

Two months had thus elapsed; the summer owers had passed away, the harvests had been athered in, the vintage had been pressed, and rown October was painting busily the woods ith the rich hues of his autumnal pallet. rom time to time they had learned that the paniards had retreated into Flanders—that onsieur de Lorraine was advancing a second me on Paris—that Turenne had marched to tercept him, but having failed to prevent his nction with the princes, had taken up a strong osition in the angle of the Seine and Hyère—e very same which had been occupied in une by the Duke—and was too strong to be tacked with any probability of success, al-ough the enemy were confident of speedily ducing him by want of forage and provision r his men. Soon afterwards news reached em, that, at the very moment when the inces imagined that the royal army must rrender within the space of a few days, the eat French captain had bridged the Seine ith boats, in several places, and extricated

all his troops without the loss of a single man, or the discovery by the enemy that he so much as meditated the evacuation of his lines.

Then came intelligence that the royalists had passed the Marne at Meaux, and, marching by Borest and Mont l'Evêque, had taken a position at Courteuil, near Senlis; and that the rebels, utterly discouraged at finding themselves thus out-manœuvred, and left in a devastated region with all their work to do a second time, their foreign friends deserting them meanwhile, and their abettors—the mob of the great cities—becoming weary of them, had fallen back into Champagne and Lorraine; the Spanish leaders having engaged to meet them at Rethel on the Aisne, and aid them to reduce such fortresses and strongholds in those provinces as might be necessary to secure their winter quarters. The consequence of these events, it was predicted strongly, would be the return of the Court to Paris, and Alice was encouraged to expect a speedy summons thither.

Such was the state of affairs in the realm of France, when, on one bright clear morning it was announced, with no small bustle through the streets of Boulogne, that an English barque

ad come into port a little after sunrise; and
nat a government courier was even at the
ioment entering the town with despatches, it
as supposed, of great moment. An hour or
wo afterwards the attention of Alice was at
racted by the great concourse which began to
our through all the thoroughfares towards the
arket-place, where she soon learned, from the
xclamations of the people, the Governor of
ie royal garrison was about to address the
itizens touching some news which had arrived
om Paris. She had already risen from the
indow, by which she had been sitting, with
ie intent of sending one of the men to learn
hat was passing, when the door opened, and
er maid, Margaret, came in bearing two letters,
ith a face full of well-pleased smiles, ex-
laiming, "From England, Mistress Alice, from
ngland! and from Paris, too—and all the
own are mad, I think, for joy—for the great
Iarshal, I forget his name, has beat the Round-
eads."

"The Roundheads!" replied Alice, with a
mile, "the Rebels, you mean, Margaret; there
re no Roundheads here!"

"Well, then, the Rebels, Mistress Alice,"

answered the girl, "but I thought it was all one—our Roundheads, I am sure, were Rebels—but beaten they are, and glad I am of it—and the King, and our good Duke of York, and all the gentle cavaliers have been brought back in triumph into Paris."

"Well, that is good news, Margaret; if it be true," said Alice, "for, in that case, we can go at once to the city!"

"Oh! I shall be so glad—oh! so glad!" exclaimed the country lass, her whole face radiant with delight. "They say it is the finest place in all the universal world. When shall we go, Mistress Alice? oh! I am so glad!"

"I doubt it not," said Alice, laughing, somewhat sadly, "but be not too quick in your gladness, Margaret, for many a thing which seems to us all joy in the beginning brings in the end much sadness; and it is well if not repentance also. But leave me now, my good girl, that I may read these letters; and you shall hear all in season." And, as she spoke, she tore the cover of the English letter, which was addressed in the familiar hand of her cousin, and seemed from its bulk to contain several enclosures. The first, on which her eye

ll as she broke the seal, was a small note
irected separately to herself with the word
Private" added to the superscription — the
riting was still Henry's, and her heart beat
multuously as she opened it, for she half-
ared that he might have procured her pardon
om the Lord General, coupled with some
nditions, which it would have been painful to
r to refuse, and to admit impossible. But her
art smote her, for the imperfect thought, even
she began to form it, and her fears were
lieved at once when she read as follows :—

"I know not, cousin Alice, that I should
ve written at all by this present opportunity,
e barque, 'Good Providence,' about to sail
is morning from Tower Stairs, I being at this
me in London, but that some matters came to
y ear last night which I judge all important
be made known to you forthwith; and
ould it seem to you that I am overbold in
uching on them, you will, I think, excuse me,
eing that I write only for your personal ad-
ntage; and farther, that I once most un-
ittingly misled you in relation to one of whom
ou have thought favourably. To be brief,

cousin Alice, I learned yesternight that the report, which Cromwell sent to me at first, was not the truth at all—he not as yet having perused the papers. There was, indeed, a letter to Sir Edmund Vavasour, from Captain Wyvil; but it related solely to a projected rising in the North, which Wyvil, it would seem, discouraged, and contained not one word touching yourself, or his escape from Woolverton. All that affected you, or Master Selby, was written in a long epistle, addressed to yourself, and marked on the outside 'to be delivered privately by Master Bartram.' What more it contained I know not; for it was burnt by the Lord General at once, who rated, as I hear, the council very roundly for breaking private seals, and troubling their heads with woman's matters. This I consider it my duty to let you know forthwith; as you, I know, drew false conclusions from the rumour, and I—to my shame be it said—strengthened, so far as in me lay, instead of seeking to allay your indignation.

"I deem it, therefore, my bounden duty to let you know these facts; and that, although it may have been indiscreet in Captain Wyvil to commit such things at all to writing, he certainly

uite exonerated from all charge of any thing
e or dishonourable. I am rejoiced to have
my power to add that something in the
e and tenour of his letter affected the Lord
eral so favourably, that I have been able to
in his promise of a full pardon for yourself,
your father, within the space of six months,
a reversal of the decree of sequestration; so
by the next spring at furthest, you may re-
to Woolverton. I have no doubt, more-
, so much was Cromwell gratified by the
of Captain Wyvil's letter to Sir Edmund,
ecating any partial risings which could but
to bloodshed and fresh miseries, without ef-
ng anything to aid the royal cause, and
king with indignant condemnation of those
nous schemes which we hear of—that, if at
future period he should feel disposed to
n to England, a ready abrogation of his out-
y could be obtained, he only binding him-
on parole of honour to take no hostile steps
nst the existing government. Should you
with him, as you doubtless will, in Paris,
her I fancy, by all we hear of Monsieur
enne's successes, you will proceed ere long,
say to him that, should he entertain such

views, he will at all times find in me one anxious to assist him by all means in my power. I may add here, that every post that has reached us from the armies speaks of his gallantry and conduct, as a partisan commander, in the highest terms of commendation.

"I have enclosed herewith bills on Parisian goldsmiths for one thousand pounds, made payable to your name; which you will endorse upon them, on receiving their value, but no sooner, as in case of loss they are useless until your name is signed upon them. I have preferred this mode to sending them to my kind friend and cousin Master Selby, fearing that his secluded habits and tastes for literary occupation may render him averse or at least indisposed to the details of business. Praying you, my dear mistress Alice, to hold me ever in your kind remembrance, and to commend me to your good father's friendship,

"I subscribe myself, with sincerity,

"Your true friend and willing servant,

"HENRY CHALONER.

"*Postscriptum*:—When I was last at Woolverton, all your old protégées and tenantry were

ll in health, and earnest in inquiries after
ir bounteous lady and most kind mistress.
' From my house in the Strand, this
5th day of October, 1652."

What were the thoughts of the sweet girl as
perused, line after line, the welcome letter
ch assured her that she had falsely blamed
lover—that he was true and stainless of
ry blot upon his honour—that, so far from
getting her, he had seized the first, as it
ned, safe opportunity of correspondence—
be more readily imagined than described.
tears gushed to her eyes before she had
l one half of it, and blinded her for
eral minutes; yet they were pleasant tears,
as they flowed they soothed her restless and
urbed imagination. She dried them, and
l on, and wept again; and wept and read al-
ately, till she had run it over many times,
had its contents as it were by heart; then
sat for a long while immoveable and silent,
muning with her own soul in secret; and
n at last, as she yielded altogether to the con-
ion that she had indeed been in error all the
e, that all her hopes—when she had most

believed them withering and blighted—were in fair progress towards fulfilment, she fell down on her knees and poured forth to the Great Giver of all human joy and sorrow, a flood of holy heartfelt gratitude and humble adoration. She prayed for pardon of her past doubts and secret murmurings; for strength to bear this sudden change from the abyss of sorrow to happiness unspeakable, without undue and impious exultation; and, having prayed, she rose refreshed and strengthened, and more like herself than she had felt for months.

This duty finished, as soon as she felt sufficiently composed to betake herself to less exciting matters, she opened the other letter, which she saw at once was from her kind relation, Madame de Gondi. This confirmed fully the tidings which had been brought to Boulogne by the courier; the Court was once more reinstalled in the Louvre, the good Parisians having received their King, whom for many months they had banished from his capital, which they had even suffered to be filled with the red scarfs of the Spanish soldiers, and the Burgundian standards of his most desperate enemies, with acclamations so enthusiastic and such outbursts of

ous loyalty, that any one would have sup-
ed he had absented himself for so long a time
opposition to the wishes of his subjects. The
ay of the Princes had retreated into Cham-
ne, and the King's troops, under the inde-
gable Turenne, were in full pursuit of them,
ing already taken Chateau-Porcien, and
hel on the Aisne.

Come then, at once, come dearest Alice,"
the concluding sentences, "persuade your
er to tear himself without delay from his
books; and come to us, while we are all
yed in smiles and merriment—there are
e fêtes and balls, more masques and carou-
, than we have seen for many a year; and as,
ay the truth, we are the least in the world
ngeable and capricious, we good citizens of
is—so that six months hence we may be
in all rebels, and blockaded or besieged, and
ishing and furious—it is best that you should
e immediately and see us *au plus beau!* But
ously, the roads are all clear now; and there
othing to hinder you, but every thing on the
trary to make it wise that you should set out

instantly. So order out your horse
your carriage, the very day you g
and I will look for you within the

"Your English King is here, bu
York, who, *entre nous*, is much
taste, is absent with the army; so
part, and the best, of your countr
a dozen noble buffoons and pro
without gaiety, and vicious witl
are King Charles's familiar fri
your braves is here, however, a
mad with admiration of him. H
wounded at Rethel on the Aisne,
for the time; so they have given h
in the Garde Royale. He wears
broidered scarf, but the ladies sa
render himself more interesting,
less, for by all accounts he is *bea*
ange! I suppose I need scarcely
cavalier parfait is no other tha
Wyvil, concerning whom I have s
to you. Adieu! a thousand rem
your dear father. Now come at
I know that I can have you her
me désole without you.

"In the sweet hope of soon embracing you,
"Yours ever, ever,
"HENRIETTE DE GONDI.
"Hotel de Gondi, Faubourg St. Germain,
October 25."

She had scarcely finished reading these two, to her most interesting, letters, when disturbed from his meditations by the clamours and acclamations of the great loyal mob, which had been constantly increasing, ever since the arrival of the courier, her father entered the room in his sad-coloured morning gown, carrying in his hand an open volume of Longinus, with an air of extreme dissatisfaction.

"I wish, beyond all measure, that we could leave this odious town"—he began, before Alice had an opportunity of addressing him—"I never have a moment's quiet from sunrise to bed-time, what with *poissardes* yelling and howling through the streets at dawn like the Eumenides of Orestes, and fifty thousand other trades and callings, all bellowing out their miserable wares —and now, since nine o'clock, there has been one continuous stream of madmen parading to and fro beneath my windows. I verily believe

that this must be Babel; and that the confusion of tongues was nothing more than causing all the nations simultaneously to begin speaking French—for I am quite sure of this, that they cannot understand one another. I would give any thing in the world to be able to quit this place, even if it were to go to the Bastille."

"I am sure, then, I am very glad, my dear father,"—replied Alice, almost laughing, when she thought of the long protracted annoyance which he must have endured, before his naturally calm and placid temper was worked into this fume and ferment—"very glad, to tell you, that you can leave it, when you please; within two hours if you think proper."

"How is that, Alice? I do not understand—what is it? I thought we could not go to Paris on account of this civil war—the people *are* mad, I believe, all the world over—for it seems to me that the only occupation of every nation, on the whole face of the globe, is cutting its own throat; as if there were not foreigners and strangers, or enemies as they call them, enough to kill, if they must be for ever killing."

"The war, however, is at an end, father—I have just received one letter from Madame de

Gondi, telling me that the King and all the court have returned to Paris, and praying us to set forth this very day."

"Well! and have you not given orders?—Have you not caused the carriage to be prepared?—Have you not directed the horses to be harnessed?—I am sure I can be ready in a quarter of an hour."

"I do not doubt it, in the least," said Alice, laughing merrily—"You have only got to change your morning-gown for your black velvet doublet, and to shut up that volume of Lycophron. I suppose it is; for that's the hardest book in all the world, they say—and then, you know, you would be ready to go to the top of Mount Caucasus."

"Now you are laughing at me, Alice—now you are laughing at me, and this is not Lycophron at all, but Longinus on the Sublime and Beautiful!—But why can we not set forth in half an hour?"

"Oh! for a hundred reasons," she replied, "In the first place, because ladies cannot prepare themselves for journeys with quite so much rapidity as you of the ruder sex—secondly, be-

cause we have got to send to the bankers for some money, to pay our bills, and to pack our trunks and mails—and lastly, because it is necessary to have our passports *visès*, before we can proceed any farther. All this, however, I will send Charles, who speaks French perfectly well, to arrange immediately ; and, if you will but moderate your impatience a little, we will set off this afternoon. But you must listen to me now ; for I have much to tell you that is of importance, though you have been too much excited hitherto to listen to me. I have another letter from cousin Henry ! and he has obtained Cromwell's promise that we shall both receive a full pardon, and be at liberty to return to dear Woolverton, in the spring—is not that good news, father ?—And he goes on to say that there was nothing in Captain Wyvil's letter to his kinsman, relating in the least degree to any of us ; and that the whole was discovered from his letter to myself ; which the Lord General blamed the council exceedingly for opening, and burnt, as soon as it came into his hands. He was pleased too with Captain Wyvil's style of sentiment and tone of writing, and will grant

him a pardon likewise, if he ask for it, on parole not to act against the government. So every thing, you see, is going to end happily."

"God grant it may,"—answered the old man solemnly,—"I would fain once again see Woolverton, before I die; but there is on my mind a deep impression, I know not wherefore, that I shall not. It is, however, I doubt not, only an old man's fancy. And you see that I was right about your young cavalier, Alice. I was quite sure it was not in the nature of things that he could be so base a villain as gratuitously to betray those who had risked their lives to save him. But I will go and arrange my books and papers; for I have something more to do, you saucy one, than to shut up this one volume of Longinus—and I beseech you make all haste you can with your preparations, for I do ardently desire to leave this noisy town."

"I will—I will indeed, dear father," answered Alice, "but upon my word, I am very much afraid that in going to Paris you will only exchange a small tumult for a great one. The people, I fancy, from Madame de Gondi's letter, are madder there than any where else in the world."

"Ay! but I shall not be forced to live there out in the street, which I might as well be doing as occupying that miserable little room looking on that *place*, which seems to me to be the particular resort of all the market women, and knaves, and swindlers in Boulogne—but for that matter! I believe the whole population of the place is made up of the three species. Besides! there are some great Grècians in the Sorbonne, and I shall meet with some one fit to speak to upon reasonable subjects."

"That is to say upon the most unreasonable subjects in the world," said she, laughing again—"but I am glad to hear that you anticipate pleasure, where I feared you would only find annoyance, but I will go now, and make my arrangements." This was soon done; and immediately after dinner, which was served in these primitive days about noon, they set forth on their journey with their own horses and outriders, and a French courier in a half military dress, with a short hanger at his side, and a gold-laced chapeau, perched on the box in the front of the huge and cumbrous vehicle.

The weather was lovely, with that pure blue sky which indicates the existence of a slight

degree of frost; and the country, though not in itself very varied or attractive, looked beautiful to eyes which had been long confined to the dull range of dingy streets in the small seaport town, particularly as it was now decked with all the gay and various tints of autumn, and was enlivened by the glorious sunshine, which poured over it, from the unclouded heaven. These were times when journeys were not made with the lightning speed of steam carriages and railways, nor even with the less wonderful rapidity of post-horses, and light chariots; and accordingly many days elapsed before they reached the neighbourhood of the metropolis. Nothing occurred, however, to impede their progress; no accident beyond the ordinary casualties, such as the casting of a leader's shoe, or the breaking of a wheeler's trace, befel them; but still they did not meet Madame de Gondi's expectations, if she indeed looked for them, as she said, within the week in which they started.

The weather still continued fine, and, though it was in some sort wearisome to be confined for so many days to the narrow compass of a carriage, there were still many intervals of rest,

when they halted at noonday in some pleasant hamlet, or at some comfortable wayside hostelry, to bait their jaded horses ; there was still much to see that was new and strange to the English eyes of Alice ; and, on the whole, the time could not be said to pass unpleasantly. As for her father, he having taken the precaution of bringing along with him, as travelling companions, four or five volumes of the most obscure and difficult Greek authors, it made very little difference to him, whether he was rolling heavily over the deep and sandy roads, in a tolerably roomy vehicle, or sitting in a small close study. Indeed, he once or twice expressed his preference of the carriage, to the lodging he had lately vacated at Boulogne.

Making their way thus daily by gentle journeys, it was late in the afternoon of the ninth day that the comparatively crowded state of the roads gave notice to the travellers that they were beginning to approach the suburbs of the gay metropolis. At every mile the number, both of carriages and passengers, increased. Now they would pass a rude ox-cart, creaking and groaning under the weight of huge pipes of wine; and now they would in turn be passed

by some gay equipage, drawn by six stately horses, covered with gilded trappings, with outriders in gorgeous liveries, glittering through the dust which they raised in their rapid transit. Now it would be a group of jovial farmers jogging home, after disposing of the produce of their fields or dairies, with heavy pockets and light hearts; now an old crone plodding along with her panniers full of eggs, or chickens, on the slow sober palfry; and now a gang of hideous-looking beggars, with loathsome sores displayed to excite compassion; or some keen-witted and sharp-visaged fry of youthful rogues and swindlers, with ever and anon a gay cavalcade, with waving plumes and jingling spurs, and lace and embroidery enough on their doublets to furnish forth a warehouse, dashing impetuously forward, and almost trampling the slower and more infirm of the pedestrians under foot; or a gendarme of the police frowning from beneath the shade of his steel cap on the known face of some incorrigible and notorious vagabond; or, spurring furiously along with belted waist and leathern despatch bag, some government courier, bearing, unconsciously, the fate of nations at his back.

All was gay bustle and excitement, increasing more and more as they drew nigher to the gates of Paris; at length they came so near that they might see the huge square towers of Notre Dame looming up clear and massive above the house tops, and hear the humming din which rises from the vast and busy throng that swarm in the dense streets of the great metropolis—and now the barrier was before them close at hand, and their courier was fumbling already in his portfolio for the passports, when a loud singing laugh, distinctly audible above the clatter of several horses' feet in rapid motion, came to the ears of Alice, and the next moment, as she leaned forward to the open window, several persons galloped past the carriage at an extremely rapid pace. The foremost was a tall and splendidly formed girl, with large and rather bold black eyes, and a profusion of long jetty ringlets falling from under the brim of her green velvet riding-hat. She was superbly dressed in the magnificent fashion of the day, her velvet habit all laced and braided with gold cords, and slashed with satin, and the housings of her beautiful horse, which she sat fearlessly and managed with

much skill, bedecked with embroidery and fringes of the same rich material.

At her left hand, on the side farthest from the carriage, rode a fine military-looking man, of an erect and stately figure, with hair as white as snow, attired in a rich civil suit; and beyond him a singularly handsome youth, of a dark complexion, with an expression of keen vivid daring, clad in the complete uniform of the French *garde à cheval.* Three or four servants followed in dark blue liveries, and everything bespoke them persons of quality and distinction. But Alice had not time to observe all these particulars, before the young lady, whose eyes had encountered her own as she passed by, exclaimed, to her great surprise, in English, for her beauty was rather of an Italian or Spanish character, with a voice very musical and sweet but pitched a little too high—"Oh! father look—look what a lovely English girl is in that carriage!"—and instantly directed the attention of the whole party to the object of her admiration. They passed so rapidly, however, that she had scarcely time to draw back, blushing and confused, before they had swept onward. The moment afterwards another officer,

in the same showy uniform, drove by the window, galloping even more rapidly than those who went before, as if trying to overtake them, and calling loudly after them to wait for him. He too spoke English, and there was something in the tones of his voice that induced Alice, who had shrunk back into the corner of the carriage, to look forth at the passer. One glance was enough to show her the keen aquiline features, the bright blue eye, and the soft flowing hair of her affianced lover—for it was Wyvil—but he dashed onward without seeing her, or suspecting that the heavy travel-stained carriage contained any one with whom he was acquainted, and in a moment was riding by the side of the dark beauty.

"Oh!" Alice cried, while he was yet in sight—"Oh, that was Captain Wyvil, who rode by them!"

"Was it? was it, indeed? Why did you not call to him, Alice? you might have done so very fitly; for, of course, he did not see you, or he would certainly have stopped."

"Oh, no! he did not see me, I know that quite well," said she, "but he rode by so very fast that I had not time—I had but barely

ecognised him before he was gone—for he was
lloping as hard as he could to overtake one
the most beautiful girls I ever saw in all my
e, who had cantered on before. An English
rl she was too, for I heard her speak; but
ry dark, with coal-black hair and eyes. I
onder who she was; there was a noble-looking
ay-haired man, whom she called father, by
r side, and a handsome young French officer;
d they had several servants in rich liveries—
ey must have been persons of distinction."

"Well, Alice, it will not after all make so
ıch difference, for we will find out where he
es to-morrow, and send him word that we
ve come to Paris, and doubtless he will be at
ır feet in a minute—but I declare here we
at the gates already!"

A few minutes passed while the courier was
rleying with the gendarme on duty and
playing the passports, which proved to be
rect, and then they drove on slowly through
ill-paved and narrow streets for nearly half
hour, before they reached the Faubourg,
erein was situated the Hotel de Gondi, a
ble pile of dark red brick with a courtyard
front, to which a stately *porte cochere* gave

access, and a magnificent façade adorned with columns, all bearing witness of the wealth and dignity of the owner, who was indeed closely connected with the greatest families of France, the husband of the lady being the nephew of the Duc de Retz, and cousin to the celebrated cardinal of that name, who, after having opposed the Queen Regent and her favourite Mazarin by every factious means imaginable, had nevertheless played his part with so much dexterity and skill, that now, on the banishment of that wily minister, he had contrived to ingratiate himself with Anne of Austria, and her son, from whose hands he had recently received the cardinal's hat, which he had so long coveted in vain.

The hall of the hotel was crowded with lacqueys in superb liveries; and a tall gray-headed *maître d'hôtel* hurrying out to assist Alice to descend from the carriage, and, saying that he presumed he had the honour to address Mademoiselle Selby, escorted her, bowing at every landing-place, up a magnificent staircase with gilded balustrades, and the walls finely painted with subjects of the Odyssey and Iliad; and through a suite of stately rooms all furnished

the superbly massive style which has taken name from the luxurious monarch in whose ys it was introduced, with cabinets of buhl d marquetry, gigantic mirrors in huge sculp-red frames, arm-chairs and ottomans of velvet d embroidery, fine pictures, tapestry, and rtains fringed with gold, into the boudoir of e Marquise. But the Marchioness de Gondi s by far too important a personage, both in r own estimation and in the opinion of her ends, to be introduced thus at the fag-end of hapter.

CHAPTER II.

HENRIETTE DE GONDI, who rose from the deeply cushioned chair in which she was reclining, with her hair fully dressed, and robed in a superb brocade, was a tall, delicately formed, fair complexioned woman, of something more than forty years, but showing few traces either in face or form, of the time that had passed over her. Her manner was marked by much affectionate eagerness, as she embraced her youthful relative repeatedly and very warmly; seeming to be, and in truth being actually delighted at having it in her power to receive her. Master Selby, whom she had seen many years ago, she also greeted very kindly, and set him at his ease in a moment, but with Alice, whose extreme loveliness took her

quite by surprise, she was evidently charmed; and felt that she was one whose perfect manners and rare beauty would reflect honour on the person who should introduce her to the court of that gay and voluptuous city.

"Now, my sweet friend," she cried, "how happy we shall be all here together! Upon my word, I think myself much obliged to this good Cromwell, whom all your English folks are cursing so unsparingly; for I suppose, if it had not been for him, we should never have had any chance of seeing you here in France."

"But you will be, I am sure, much more obliged to him, when you know that he has promised, in the spring, to pardon both my father and myself, and to give us back our estates; so that instead of looking upon this as a sad state of exile, it is, indeed, only a pleasant visit to a dear cousin, and a pleasant land."

"Of course, I am obliged to him for doing anything that is agreeable to you," answered Madame de Gondi, "but I assure you, I have no idea of parting with you in the spring. Who knows but some of our gay gallants may persuade you, as they did my dear mother, to stay here always and become a Frenchwoman? Nay!

do not blush so deeply, Alice, for I was only jesting; but, by my faith! I think that burning blush tells something further than it was intended to reveal—tells something of an island lover. Well! well! if it must be so, I shall not repine, provided he be brave, and handsome, and well-born, and very graceful, and accomplished. But, on my word! I had forgotten what I had intended to ask you, the very moment you came in—what it was that you could possibly have done to enrage Cromwell and the government so much against you?"

"Oh! that is a long tale, Madame la Marquise," interposed her father, who, deeming it incumbent on him to be unusually civil during this first interview with their kind hostess, had kept his faculties on the alert for a space that was quite wonderful to Alice; "but to be brief, Alice brought to the house a young cavalier, whom she met flying from the battle-ground of Worcester, with a troop of rebels at his heels; and we sheltered him, though he was what they call a proclaimed rebel, whom all men were forbid on pain of death to harbour or assist, until he made good his escape to France. This was discovered by an accident, and we in conse-

quence were forced to fly, and our estates were sequestrated."

"To France, to France, did he fly? then you will meet him,—you *must* meet him here! Ah! now I understand that blush, *ma belle cousine*," she added, looking at Alice with an arch glance, "but I suppose he had a name, this cavalier?"

"He had indeed a name, madame," said Alice, rallying from her short confusion, and laughing gaily, "and it was one that you are well acquainted with already. It is lucky too for me, that you are a little premature in your conclusions; for if I had lost my heart to him, as you insinuate, it seems I should have had to dispute his with almost all your beauties here in France, perhaps with yourself, cousin."

"With me! *fi donc!* with me, who am already an old woman; but I assure you that I do not understand at all. Who is he, pray explain, who is he?"

"He is no other than the captain Wyvil, of whom your letters for some time have been so full!"—"The captain Wyvil!" exclaimed Henriette de Gondi, and that too in no small astonishment. "The captain Wyvil! and you have never once mentioned that you knew him! nor has he said one word of your assisting him to fly!"

"In that, madame"—the old man again interposed, unwilling that Alice should be too hardly pressed—"he did but act with common prudence; the slightest mention of it here might have led to the worst consequences, and the same reason, of course, justified Alice in keeping silent to you on the subject; since we know very well how often couriers are intercepted on the road, and robbed of their despatches."

But though she said nothing more upon the subject, and appeared to be completely satisfied, Henriette de Gondi was neither deceived, nor at ease. She had seen much of the world, and that too in its most polished and artificial phases; she had lived for years in the midst of that high and courtly society wherein every man and woman learned to conceal with the impenetrable mask of smiles, or nonchalance, or smooth tranquillity, the deepest feelings of their own hearts; and, at the same time, to peruse the thoughts and inmost sentiments of others, from the most trifling and superficial indications. Thus she was far from being misled, either by the unconcerned manner which Alice had assumed, or by the explanation given by her father; but, on the contrary, was confirmed in her first opinion, that her cousin did love the gay young officer, whose

life she had preserved; although her mind was crossed by many a doubt and suspicion as to his worthiness of her affection.

She said, however, nothing in reply; but sat for a few moments quietly musing on the course which she ought to follow; for rumours had been spread, broadly enough to reach her ears, concerning the attentions which were paid with so much assiduity by Marmaduke to the fair Isabella Oswald, and received by her with such evident pleasure; and, she thought to herself, and thought rightly, this beautiful English girl, brought up from her childhood in the solitude of a country life, is just the being to conceive a romantic passion, and, that disappointed, to be a blighted and heart-broken thing for ever; and doubting very much whether Wyvil cared anything for her, she began to think whether it was not her duty to caution her against him. But, after a few moments of consideration, she felt that as yet it was too delicate a step to be taken lightly, and that it was not warranted by anything beyond a mere suspicion; she resolved, therefore, to let matters take their own course, reserving to herself the power of watching closely, and interfering the moment interference should seem necessary.

Meantime, for it was rapidly growing dark, candles were brought in, and the fine suite of rooms brilliantly lighted up; then coffee, at that time a rare and exceedingly expensive luxury, was introduced, and Henriette de Gondi telling her guests that she expected a few visitors in the evening, and consigning Master Selby to the care of the *maitre d'hotel*, who, she said, would instal him in a pleasant suite of chambers communicating with the library, proceeded to introduce Alice to the mysteries of a Parisian toilet, trifling and laughing merrily the while, and striving to entertain her fair cousin with all the gay and lively gossip which formed the conversation of the court circles. Many things there were in those light anecdotes that excited the unmitigated wonder, many that called forth the deep loathing, not all unmixed with indignation, of the sweet English girl; who, unsophisticated by the false sophistries of fashionable life, nurtured in grave and pure seclusion, whither the very name of unblushing sin had scarcely penetrated, brought up in perhaps the most moral age of the most moral country in the world, could ill brook to hear crimes, such as her uncontaminated soul had scarcely conceived possible, named as things quite of usual and every day occur-

rence, chastity treated as a marvel, and virtue as a fiction, or a jest.

It was not that Henriette de Gondi was herself light, or frail, or vicious—nor yet that society had reached that abyss of infamy, into which it sank headlong in the days of Louis XV., and still more during the frantic horrors of the revolution—but that, already, it had become no rare or extraordinary fact for married women to have favoured lovers, and for married men to court girls of rank, and win them to become their mistresses, and that too without losing caste or station. Now, it is very true, that something of all this had penetrated even to the pure ears of Alice; for it had become somewhat common in puritanic England to rail loudly at the vices and the crimes of the neighbouring kingdom, vices and crimes which she was soon about to imitate even to exaggeration under the sway of the third and basest of the unhappy and doomed Stuarts. But though she knew that such things were, it had never so much as entered her imagination, that they could be matters of daily comment, laughed at, and jested over; and, if unapproved, at least uncondemned, by the lips of virtuous and noble ladies. It was not long,

therefore, before Henriette perceived in the downcast eye raised suddenly and opened wide with wonder, in the averted head, and crimson blushes of her innocent guest, how much she was dismayed, and, it must be said, disgusted likewise, by the freedom of her anecdotes, and the whole tone of her conversation.

"You must not imagine now"—she said, as Alice turned away in irrepressible disapprobation, at some tale of guilt and infamy—"that I think lightly of these shocking things; or speak of them, because I find pleasure in their recital. Far from it, dearest cousin, for, in mere truth, I hate and loathe them, even as I can see that you do. Praise be to Heaven!—the foulest and most ribald tongue in all France dare not so much as breathe a whisper adverse to the fair fame of Henriette de Gondi, as maid, or wife, or widow. Oh no! dear girl, I only spoke to set you on your guard; for you will hear these things talked over freely, not only by the frail and the licentious, but by the good, and virtuous, and noble; by those who would die sooner than sink their souls to the degrading blight of sin—and spoken of by all in the same tone of gay and thoughtless raillery. I judge

it best to make you know all this at once, that you may see at once how it behoves you to deal with it. Nay! do not interrupt me—do not interrupt me, cousin; I do not for a moment mean that you should think, or speak of these things, as we do here; but I would have you learn to repress that look of wonder, mixed with hatred, to check that unsophisticated start, to keep down those bright blushes—for this is a wicked and ill-judging world, in which we live; and by the people, you will meet here on all sides, such indications would be considered only as the result of consciousness and prudery, or of a desire to attract notice and woo admiration for superior virtue; you must just hear such things; and hear them, as if they had not been spoken, calmly and coldly, without smiling on the one side, or bridling and blushing on the other. I shall, of course, take care to keep aloof from you, so much as I can do so, those whom you would deem unfit associates, whether gentlemen or ladies—none come to my poor house but persons of repute; still, as I said just now, you will hear much that will pain you, and that might cause you grave mortification, if you do not take my advice."

"Oh! dear, Madame de Gondi"—Alice replied, half-crying—"I had so much, much rather live here with you in private, and in quiet, while we remain in Paris. Consider I am nothing but a mere country girl, perfectly unfit to associate with these people; I shall only commit some absurdity, and bring mortification upon you, and shame upon myself—Oh! no, no—I can never mix with such people as you talk of—I should be utterly, utterly wretched! in truth you must excuse me."

"Impossible, my dearest girl—impossible indeed!"—replied Henriette—"in every way, it is quite impossible that I should excuse you. In the first place I do not, and I cannot, live in private, or in quiet. My birth, my station, and the state of the times forbid it. You see Alice, though I am, as was my most excellent late lord, a zealous loyalist, all the rest of our house are more or less disaffected; and, though the Cardinal de Retz has just received the Hat from the young King, and is for the present in high favour with the Court, there is no telling how long it may last; he is always plotting and conspiring for one thing or other, and just as like as not

before six weeks* he may find himself in the Bastille. It will be known, moreover—nay I might say it is known even now—that I have guests from England residing in my house. If therefore I should absent myself from court at present, or going thither fail to have you presented likewise, it would forthwith be suspected every where, and rumoured that your father and yourself belonged to the rebel English party; since all your royalist countrymen are at the present time in high favour with the court; and affect to frequent it constantly, to show their gratitude for our King's kindness to the exiled majesty of England. It is impossible, therefore, that I can either shut my house up, during your stay, or suffer you to remain in seclusion. The consequences of such a step might be of serious evil to me, Alice; and I am sure you would not subject me to that, and only to avoid a little temporary inconvenience!"

"That would I not, indeed," exclaimed Alice, eagerly,—"that would I not for the whole world;

* It will be seen by reference to history, that the opinion of the lady was justified in all respects, except the place of his imprisonment. He was arrested and sent to Vincennes on the 19th of December, 1652.

but it seems to me, indeed, that there is a want of principle even in lending countenance to such things,—besides, I am certain that I never could act as you bid me; it is so different from anything that I have ever been used to—so utterly abhorrent to the usages of England."

"Oh, yes, that is quite true," answered Madame de Gondi; "but believe me, my dear girl, it will not do for us to go about, like the night-errantry of old, attempting to bully the world into reform; if we do that which is right ourselves, and set a good example, quietly, by our own conduct, we play the best, nay! the only part, that is fit for women. As for the rest, mere difference of custom between two countries, by no means really implies that the usages of this are absolutely right, or of that absolutely wrong; and in the present instance, Alice, much as I deprecate the overlightness, the real and still more the affected depravity of France, I am not quite sure that the puritanical hypocrisy, the fierce fanaticism, the stern untolerating hardness of religion, which is at present worn in England, I fear me, as a cloak to much secret vice, is the worse and more dangerous evil. But we have not the time to discuss these grave and serious matters, for I perceive by the sound

of wheels and the glare of flambeaux in the court yard, that some of my guests have arrived; and your toilet is finished. Really you are *mise a ravir;* I had no idea that the English had attained so much skill in the science of dressing. Come, come, now; I will take care that you shall meet no annoyance."

With these words, she took Alice Selby under her arm, and walking down the grand staircase, now splendidly illuminated, entered through several antechambers—so filled with liveried lacqueys and magnificently dressed upper servants, that Alice almost fancied herself in some royal palace—a brilliant drawing-room, all glittering with marquetry and buhl and gorgeous mirrors, wherein were reflected fifty-fold from sconce and chandelier the gay and cheerful lights which made the great saloon almost as bright as day. Here several guests had already gathered ; and with the easy and informal grace, which characterized then, as it does at the present day, the domestic *réunions* of French society, had fallen into various groups, chatting and laughing and pleasing, each one the other, without effort or constraint or marked desire to please. The company assembled were not many in number, not ex-

ceeding a dozen or fifteen persons, all splendidly dressed, some in gay uniforms, others in gorgeous civil dresses, all fluttering with rich lace and bright ribbons, and glittering with embroideries ; and these were grouped in different sets upon the numerous ottomans and couches which filled, according to the fashion of the day, the large saloon with their luxurious though somewhat cumbersome variety.

Among these were but three ladies ; one—to whom Madame de Gondi, sliding as it were imperceptibly into companionship with her visitors, made Alice known as Madame de Maignelai,—a singularly venerable looking person, advanced considerably in years, but with a calm beneficent placidity of feature, which made her appear almost beautiful, was engaged in conversation with the good Bishop of Lisieux ; well suited to be, what indeed they were, intimate friends and associates, as being at that time perhaps the two most virtuous and unpretending and truly pious persons in the French King's dominions; and by her the young English girl was received with a tenderness of manner, a motherly air of unforced protection, that while it set her completely at her ease, went far to

induce her to believe Madame de Gondi's late remarks upon society exaggerated and undue. After a few words had been interchanged, relative to the cause of her new friend's visit to the French metropolis, the length of time that had elapsed since her arrival, and such inductive topics, "I suppose, then," said the good old lady, "that you have but a few acquaintance here among us?"

"Very few, very few, indeed, Madame," Alice replied, "or I might almost say none at all; for except my cousin, Henriette, and yourself, and Monsieur de Lisieux, I do not believe there is a person in all France whom I have ever seen, unless it be some of my countrymen who have been forced to take refuge here from the persecution of all these civil wars and conspiracies at home."

"Yes, you will see many of them here; they are all in great favour at the court, since your young Duke of York has so distinguished himself with our good marêchal; but, to say truly, I know but few of them; but, in the meantime, I must point out to you some of our great people, for we have here several celebrities. There, do you see that gentleman, in purple velvet, with a bright star, who wears

a shade over both eyes? That is Monsieur de la Rochefoucault, one of the king's best officers; a very strange misfortune befel him in the terrible battle which was fought last July under the very walls of Paris, and in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine: while he was in the very act of carrying a barricade, a bullet entered at the corner of one eye, and came out at the corner of the other; and, what is more extraordinary yet, is, that you see him there alive, and that he sees quite well, though for a time all the physicians declared that he would certainly be blind.

"That lady to whom he is talking so merrily, she with her hair dressed high—it is the new mode called *le tour*, but I must say I think it vastly unbecoming—is the celebrated Madame de Lesdiguières, a very great politician, and some people say as great an intriguer, but people are ill-natured. See, she is rising now to go and meet the cardinal—that is the Cardinal de Retz, who is entering now, who has been at the bottom of every plot and conspiracy since he was fifteen, the enemy of Richelieu and of Mazarin, the wittiest, if not the wisest, and the most gallant man, and the greatest favourite of the people, in all Paris. He is the cousin, too, of your Ma-

dame de Gondi, so you will necessarily be presented to him. And that person, who is following the cardinal, he with the singularly intellectual face, not handsome, but instinct with soul, that is the Duc de Bouillon, the brother to the Marêchal Turenne. De Retz said of him the other day, 'that he was sure, by what he had seen of his conduct, those people did wrong to his reputation who decried it, but that he did not know if those did not do too much honour to his abilities, who thought him capable of all the great things which he did not do.' So very shrewd and clever are his speeches always, pointed and terse, but cutting. But see here comes your cousin, to make you know the cardinal; I am sure he will amuse you better far than I can, but believe me, dear young lady, should you ever want a friend, which I hope you will not, you will find one in de Maignelai."

As she spoke Henriette did indeed come up, and with the intent, as the good dowager foresaw, of bringing her young relative somewhat more prominently before her guests, now that she judged her to be in some degree at least at her ease, and superior to that timidity, which

in those circles would have appeared an absurd affectation. And she was not disappointed, for so prepossessing was the peculiar style of Alice's young English beauty, so graceful and so quiet were her manners, and above all so fluently and well did she converse in the French tongue, that before long she found herself listening, and laughing at the jests and repartees of those whose names were history, and playing her part in the social circle, as if she had lived with them all her life.

Presently supper was announced, and in a few moments all were seated at a round table, then deemed the very mode, as bringing all the guests into one common circle, covered with all the choicest dainties of the French *cuisine*, already famous the world over, Alice supported on the one hand by the young Comte de Bellefonds, celebrated as the handsomest cavalier in France; and, on the other hand, by the great cardinal himself. He ever and anon in the intervals of the stream of intrigue and finesse, which he was pouring into the ears of Madame de Lesdiguières, found leisure to indulge in some of his bright apophthegms, and quick polished sarcasms, replete with know-

ledge of the human race, and intuitive perception of character, to the delight of Alice, whose ready appreciation had charmed in no less degree the politic and wily churchman.

"Turenne," he said suddenly, in answer to some question of the young English girl; "Turenne? what do you say about him? Great? yes, indeed; he has possessed from his youth every good quality, and at an early age acquired every great one. He wants none but those of which he is not aware. He has every virtue, but the glitter of none; however, people believe him abler at the head of an army than of a faction, and I believe so too, because he is not naturally enterprising; and yet," he added, somewhat thoughtfully, "and yet, who knows?" and then, after a little pause, "but enough of Turenne," he said, "*maintenant, vive la bagatelle*, champagne, here, give us champagne!" and, filling his own and his fair neighbour's glass, he bowed with some gay witty compliment, and turned away again to talk with the intriguing Frenchwoman, by whose means he was so soon afterwards consigned to the dungeons of Vincennes.

Just at this moment, while mirth was at the

loudest, a noble looking man, dressed in the full uniform of the French guard, carrying his hat and his unbuckled sword in his left hand, entered the saloon, and gliding up to the side of Madame de Gondi, began to apologize for the lateness of his visit, and then took possession, with easy grace, of the first vacant seat, and applied himself to entertain the third lady, who was no other than the famous Marchioness de Villeroy.

"Hola! Villequier," exclaimed the young Count de Bellefonds, "what has kept you so late, you who are so great an adorer of bright eyes, and sparkling goblets?"

"Oh! we have had a little fracas at the Louvre," answered the captain of the Queen's guard, for such was the rank of the new comer. "and I, of course, was obliged to wait till everything was settled."

"A fracas!" exclaimed several voices, not without some astonishment, for in those days conspiracy trod so close on the heels of conspiracy, that the appetites of men were sharply set for novelties and horrors. "A fracas!—what was it?—tell us all—quick! quick! good Villequier, was it the Duke of Orleans?"—and

loudest among the speakers was heard the voice of de Retz.

"My good Lord Cardinal," replied Villequier, laughing, "appears to be beside himself at learning that there has been a fracas, and he not in it!—No, no! my good lord," he continued, as the laugh, which his retort had created, again subsided—"it was not his Grace of Orleans; nor was there any treason in the matter—nor, what is more surprising, even sedition. It was but a quarrel between two of these English bull-dogs, whom our young king so much affects just now. I thought they would have cut each other's throats in the palace-yard!"

"Who were they, Villequier?—what was it all about?"

"Oh! they are so ready with the sword that it's not easy to say ever what it is about—small cause suffices—but in this case it was a woman."

"Of course—of course it was," replied La Rochefoucault, with a loud laugh, "there never was a quarrel yet, but what there was a woman at the bottom of it—but come, expound—who was the woman?"

"A wondrous fair one," replied Villequier, "to my thinking—no other than the beautiful Oswald."

"Then I can name one of the combatants!" exclaimed Bellefonds.

"And I"—"And I"—"And I,"—three other voices chorused him, the last adding—"one was your new made captain of the guards—but who was the other?"

"Whom do you guess!—No, you will never guess at all; so I may just as well tell you—Sir Henry Oswald!—what do you think of that now?"

A dozen of the fashionable oaths and exclamations of the day testified the surprise of all who heard it, the ladies, who hitherto had taken but small share in the conversation, becoming all alive with the excitement of curiosity and envy. But, while all else were asking every kind of question, Madame de Gondi was employed in watching the pale and varying features of her cousin, who, though it was evident that she had not altogether understood what was passing, was not so dull but her suspicions were excited.

"I cannot tell you all, or indeed much about

it. I was called in to take them both in custody after they had been parted by the men on duty on the grand staircase. Sir Henry was, it seems, coming down from the *salon*, where there was a small court party; having heard something there which set his hasty temper in a blaze; and was, I fancy, going in search of the very man, when he fell in with him ascending, and, without waiting to get out of the palace, gave him hard words, called him a pennyless adventurer, a hireling sworder, and a presumptuous fool, for looking up to the peerless Isabella—and afterwards, when the other would have turned aside his anger by mild words, he broke out into violence, and made as if he were about to strike him; but before it had come to that, the guards seized both of them, so that neither had time to draw his sword—then I was called in, and took them both in charge; but as no blow had been stricken or sword drawn, upon their pledging their words of honour that the thing should go no farther, they were released after they had been in the guard-house nearly two hours!"

"But, after all, you have not told us what it was all about, Villequier," cried one.

"Because I do not know myself," answered he, laughing, "but I heard afterwards that some of Isabella's other suitors told the old man, having found out that it would vex him, that Major Wyvil had been sometime clandestinely accepted by the lady."

At the word, Alice, who had been listening all the time, with all her soul suspended on the tongue of the speaker, dreading to hear at every moment that the new-made captain of the guards was indeed Wyvil, turned pale as death itself, drew a long painful sigh, and would have fallen from her chair had not Madame de Gondi, who had almost foreseen what was about to happen, sprung forward and caught her in her arms, crying out as she did so, "Oh! Alice, you are over-fatigued, and I was quite wrong to teaze you into coming down to supper. Run, François, run!—and call my women—thank you, thank you, Lord Cardinal, a little water, if you please. Ah! that is right—here come Toinette and Valerie—make haste, now, but be careful—hold up her head—that's well—now carry her up stairs to her room; she is reviving even now."

"Excuse me for a few moments,"—she added,

turning towards her guests. "Mademoiselle only arrived to-day, having come all the way from Boulogne without stopping—she wished to lie down at once; but I was wrong, and persuaded her to come down stairs. Amuse yourselves, I pray you, I will return directly." And with the easy grace of their nation, they promised that they would do so; and until Madame de Gondi had retired, appeared to resume their conversation, but scarcely was she well upstairs, before leaving their compliments with the *maître d'hôtel*, they quietly and singly stole away; and, long before their hostess knew it, the house was vacant except of its customary dwellers.

CHAPTER III.

It was some time before poor Alice, despite of all appliances, returned to her senses; and, had it not been for the prudence of Madame de Gondi, who would not suffer Master Selby to be disturbed, and who, on one pretence or other, kept Margaret, Alice's faithful girl, out of the room, retaining her own women who could not speak or understand one word of English, in which tongue she was well-assured her cousin would speak when she recovered, there would have been a terrible confusion, and the whole matter would have been bruited to the household. At length, when her beautiful form had been released from all the ligatures that confined it, her temples bathed with cold

water, and stimulating essences applied, she stretched out her arm, heaved a long breath, and opened her fair eyes, but with that bewildered and unconscious expression which shows the senses to be absent although the life may have returned.

In a moment or two, indeed, they reclosed for a little space; but, when she opened them again, it was with a calmer and more intelligent glance; and she pressed her cousin's hand, saying, "I shall be better in a little while—do not be frightened, and pray do not tell my father."

"Oh! no, indeed" replied Madame de Gondi, "he has been long in bed, and all our guests have gone, and the house is quite quiet. He need not know anything about the matter; why should he? it was only the fatigue of travelling and the heat of the room." A faint and sickly smile crossed the pale lips of Alice, and she half shook her head; but her cousin, although she well knew what she meant, was resolved not to understand her, and after remaining with her till the night was far advanced towards morning, and seeing her fall into a natural and gentle sleep, she left her to the care of Margaret, saying she doubted not that she would be quite well to-morrow.

The following morning was bright and joyous, and Alice, as Madame de Gondi had foretold, was perfectly well as regards the mere health of the body, and was astir before the earliest. For when Henriette, who herself had risen some hours before her wonted time, anxious about her lovely guest, entered the chamber, she found her sitting fully dressed by the window, with her head leaning on her hand in a disconsolate mood, the maiden, Margaret, quite overdone with watching, outstretched in deep sleep on a sofa by the bed, which her mistress had so long deserted.

"Oh! my dear Alice, I am so glad to see you up and well again," exclaimed her cousin, as she entered, "I was afraid you might still feel some remains of your indisposition."

"No! oh! no," answered poor Alice, "but I am sure, I need not tell you that I was not indisposed at all."

"You love him, then?" said Henriette, but rather in the tone of a question than of a positive affirmation, "You *do* then love this captain Wyvil? I feared so from the first!"

"I saw you had my secret, cousin; and I am but a poor dissembler—besides I am sure that you will never speak of what I tell you,

and, in good truth, I want the support of a female adviser—I *do* love him."

"And he?" asked Henriette—

"Is my affianced husband; troth plighted, in the presence of my father!" Alice replied.

Madame de Gondi started, in vehement surprise—for she had, until that moment, no possible idea that matters had gone on to such a length—and she paused a little while before she made any answer; but, at last, she said, "I would be loath, my sweet Alice, to raise hopes—or, I should rather say, *renew* hopes—in your mind, which may but lead in the end to disappointment, but it appears to me that this makes all the difference. At first, I fancied this was but a girlish preference of yours—I did not even know that he returned it—"

"Madame de Gondi!" interrupted Alice, her pale face and her whole neck and bosom suffused with burning blushes, as she spoke in a tone of grave disapprobation, "and did you think so meanly of poor Alice Selby, as to deem that she would give her love unsought?"

"Indeed, indeed!" answered Henriette, "I never thought at all of Alice Selby, but as of one who was all maiden modesty and virtue—

but, trust me, dearest one, our love is not always our own to give, nor does it always wait for asking—but suffer me to finish what I was just about to say—that, fancying this to be only a girlish fancy, I doubted much the wisdom of that fancy; seeing that beyond all doubt this Captain Wyvil is somewhat famous for gallantry, and has been paying much attention to this Mademoiselle Oswald. But since you tell me that it has gone so far, I begin to believe that we have been too hasty. It is extremely likely that all this has been mere levity; that flattered and amused by the evident liking of a very pretty woman, he has allowed himself to be led about as a sort of fashionable victim, both parties well understanding one another—for I need not tell you, dear Alice, that although there may be the same depth, there is by no means the same singleness of love in man as in us women; and that full many a man, who really *is* in love, and that constantly and truly with one woman, deems it no flaw in his allegiance to make love to another, merely to pass the time, or to amuse himself in the absence of his mistress. Therefore, we must not be too quick in judging—

this Paris is a terrible place for bantering and scandal; and it is very likely that there may be no truth in this at all. But if there were—if he should prove indeed so vile and infamous a traitor—you do not love him so much, Alice, that your pride would not come to your rescue, and that you would not shake him off, as a thing too worthless for a moment's lamentation?"

"Alas! dear lady," answered poor Alice with a sigh, "should it be so, indeed, he would have robbed me of all the freshness of my soul; he would have heaped my heart with the ashes of consumed hope and happiness; he would have covered my young days with desolation; he would have taken from me that best boon of nature, confidence in the truth of our fellows, but, lady, but"—and she paused, unable to complete the sentence, and Henriette took it up.

"But you would love him yet; is it not so, dear Alice?"

"As women love but once," she answered, clasping her hands together, "I love him, and that is for ever!"

"A very, very woman!" replied Madame de Gondi, with a smile, "then is our task an easy

one ; we have to learn in the first place, whether this be not all mere rumour; and, in the second, if the wild bird's wing have been lured from its true owner by fair charms and honied words, to win him back again to his allegiance. My life on it ! and these bright sunny locks, and soft blue eyes, will wake him to his senses in a moment, if he have strayed somewhat in your absence. Gratitude, honor, faith, all bind him to your footstool. Besides, you are fairer by one-half than she, and twenty times more feminine; then think what the proverb says of old '*on revient toujours à ses premiers amours.*' Oh ! be sure, Alice, if this bright Isabella Oswald have won him for a moment, you shall retrieve him yet more easily than you have lost him."

"I would die sooner than attempt it," answered Alice, colouring high, and speaking loud, with the energy of indignation. "I win him back !" I stoop to *win* that which is mine already ! I humble myself even to receive back a pledge which he had forfeited ! No, Henriette de Gondi—no ! When Alice Selby marries, she must not only love, but respect, and esteem, and honour ! Love him—alas, for me ! I shall, and oh ! how deeply—even to my dying day—

pray for his happiness, and well-being, and honour—but never could I respect, or esteem, or honour one whose heart *could* swerve, or whose faith falters!"

"What would you do then, Alice?" asked her cousin, almost crying between sympathy and excitement. "What would you do, my sweetest Alice?"

"Pray God to give me strength to bear my sorrows meekly; and bear them, and perhaps —die, Henriette." She raised her voice with the last words so loudly that Margaret was aroused; and starting up from the sofa, exclaimed, as she rubbed her eyes, "Coming, I'm coming, Mistress Alice—did you call?" So near are the founts of tears and laughter, that, sad although she was, and grieved at heart, Madame de Gondi could not refrain from smiling at the air, half-bewildered, half-terrified and stupid, of the English maiden, when she beheld her mistress arisen from her bed, and dressed without her assistance; and, in a moment, Alice joined also in the mirth, which her quaint excuses and apologies called forth, although it was but for a second, when she

relapsed into her usual repose of air and manner.

"We will talk more of this, hereafter, Alice," said the other; "meanwhile let Margaret arrange your hair, and hurry down to breakfast; for Master Selby, I doubt not, is even now awaiting us." And, with the words, she left the bedchamber; and Alice, with that strong mastery of all her passions, that formed so prominent a feature in her character, composed herself so thoroughly, that no one could have dreamed that, a few short minutes before, her heart had been rent by the most violent emotions.

It was not long before she joined her friends at the breakfast-table, and, when she did so, although she certainly was a little pale, she conversed cheerfully and even gaily; and that too without any expression of the forced merriment which it is so painful even to witness. Old Selby was in one of his brightest moods; having quite shaken off his abstraction, and talking with much real interest, about some of the great scholars of the day, with whom he was desirous of becoming intimate, and with whom Madame de

Gondi promised to make him speedily acquainted.

"Indeed," she said in conclusion of some little offer of the kind—"I had thought of this already—we had a little supper here last night, of which I did not speak to you, fearing that you would be so ceremonious as to do what I well knew would be disagreeable to your habits; and I engaged the good old Bishop of Lisieux, who is himself a man of talent, to call on you to-day, and take you to see our famous Pierre Huet, and several others of the Academicians."

"You are indeed most kind and thoughtful," —he replied—"I myself know Pierre Huet; at least we have corresponded on subjects of mutual interest, and I feel quite as if we were old friends—"

"Yes, indeed!" interposed Alice, laughing so naturally that Henriette gazed at her in amazement—"My father used to write him long letters once a week, beginning '*Mon cher Huet.*' Lycophron, in the 397th line of his Cassandra, has the word so and so; the mystic sense of which,—and so on, whole pages full of stuff that no one in the world could possibly understand, without one intelligible word, till you came at last to

serviteur tres humble—and Monsieur Huet used to reply, '*Mon ami Selby*, Camillus and Lucius Junius Brutus were not, as foolish people have imagined, men; but merely fresh developments of the mythic personage variously represented as Ulysses, Agamemnon, and Prometheus; just in the same manner as Tarquinia, Medea, Helen, Semiramis, Omphale, and in short *all* the women mentioned in the mythologies, are new types of the witch of Endor!' These are exactly the sort of letters they used to write, upon my honour! and now my dear father talks about knowing the man; though he cannot tell you whether he is rich or poor, old or young, well disposed, or the worst of men."

"Well, that is true, that is true at least," answered Selby, smiling, "although all that stuff about the letters is an exaggeration of Alice's, and quite untrue moreover—for Huet never could have made such blunders as to say that Ulysses and Prometheus were one person. Although it may be very clearly shown that the mythical Orion—"

"For heaven's sake, dearest father," Alice interrupted him, "do not waste these most excellent, and, I have no doubt, valuable discoveries

on ears so incapable and ignorant as mine and Madame de Gondi's."

"Upon my word! I do think you were wiser to reserve them for the good bishop, or Pierre Huet," Henriette chimed in with a light silvery laugh, and the old student was compelled to join in the merriment excited by his own eccentricity.

Soon afterwards, almost indeed before the covers had been removed, and while they were yet lingering in the breakfast-room, the worthy bishop was announced; and, after a short conversation with the ladies, carried off the high-minded and unworldly scholar, apparently delighted at finding a person of pursuits and a spirit so congenial. Then, quietly resuming their previous conversation, Madame de Gondi advised her young friend very wisely neither to do nor resolve any thing rashly.

"I think, I can see," she said, "already, though I have known you for so short a time, enough of your character, to be sure that the happiness of your whole life is at stake; and that is not to be cast away on slight or mistaken causes. Moreover, to you who are, I know, so fraught with conscientious and religious scruples,

it should be no small inducement to calm and deliberate judgment, that the happiness of another is probably involved equally with your own. And above all things, I entreat you to remember, what I have learned by a life's experience, that the constancy of men and of women are very different things. A man may act, nay often *does* act, while he is perfectly true to his first love, exactly as it would argue a woman utterly false to do."

"Oh! yes"—said Alice, "I know that; and I have too much cause for wishing all to go on well, to suffer me to be rash or indiscreet in this case, even if I were naturally inclined to be so; which, I think, I am not."

"I am sure not"—said Henriette—"and you will have abundant opportunities of judging, for you will meet him everywhere, and that too in company with this lady, who is indeed very beautiful. And now that I begin to recollect, I think still more that there is nothing in this; for I remember hearing that Major Wyvil and Monsieur de Bellechassaigne performed a very brilliant exploit in saving this girl and her father from some of the Duke of Lorraine's soldiers. I fancy it will prove to be only gratitude and

friendship. But here is the carriage, I perceive, at the door; I want to take you round to some of our gay shops, to the perfumer's and the jeweller's, and fifty other pleasant places, excellent for getting rid of superfluous money; and after dinner we will go and walk in the gardens of the Tuileries, which is quite the mode nowadays; and I daresay the king will be there, and the queen mother likewise."

The morning passed agreeably, although to say the truth, the heart of Alice was far away from the gay scenes by which she was surrounded; nor were her thoughts to be diverted by the rich laces of the Low Countries, the silver fringed gloves of Bruges, the silks already famous of Lyons and Tours, and the thousand other gay and splendid wares, which, irresistible to female eyes, were everywhere displayed to tempt her. The noonday meal was ended; and, happy even at witnessing the happiness of those dear to her, Alice was gayer, when she beheld the delight of her father at the manner in which he had spent his morning, and at an engagement he had made to pass the afternoon in visiting some library full of rare manuscripts and unintelligible papyri, than she had fancied she could ever be

again—for, though she would not suffer herself to despond, she had by no means succeeded in persuading herself, as Madame de Gondi had half done, that Marmaduke was true and faithful, but, on the contrary, there was a heavy cloud continually overcasting her brighter anticipations; one of those almost causeless shadows, which all of us, even the least imaginative, at times have experienced, and which even the least superstitious half believe to be ominous of coming evil.

Soon after the dinner, the carriage was again announced; and splendidly dressed in the superb and stately fashion of the day, with the small hoop, or *vertugardi*, as it was sometimes called, not the absurd monstrosity of later days, lending a graceful contour to the hips, and setting off the slender waist displayed to advantage by the long corsage—with satin robes looped with knots of gold or silver ribbons, to show the petticoat of some rich tissue, and long brocaded trains gracefully carried over the left arm—with their long soft hair trained to fall in luxuriant ringlets over the neck and shoulders, the ladies set forth to walk in the palace gardens. Those gardens, sumptuous though they were and beautiful, were by

no means what they are now; for at that time the changes, which sprang from the exquisite taste of the great Colbert, had not as yet been made, although they were commenced only a few years later, and, in the days of which I write, the gardens were divided by a small narrow street, not cleaner than streets usually were in Paris, from the palace to which they belonged; and were flanked on the river side by a range of mean and insignificant houses, which appeared to belong to the royal residence, and detracted sadly from the dignity of the view. The magnificent terrace on the water-side had not then been constructed, nor the great basins and superb waterworks, which now form so great a portion of the attractions of the place.

They were, however, even then the finest gardens in the world; and Alice, who had been accustomed only to the natural and inartificial shrubberies and parks of her native land, could not but be struck by the aspect, by the shadowed avenues, the long rows of pleached hedges, solid and high as walls, of yew, or box, or hornbeam, by the secluded mazes cut in the massive greenery, the sheltered seats, and pleasant arbours, the urns and vases, columns and sta-

tues which decorated every open place, and by the fountains, which, though far less noble than the jets which now adorn those princely gardens, sparkled and flashed with bright prismatic colours in the unrivalled clear autumn sunshine.

The gardens were already crowded with the fair, and great and noble, when Henriette de Gondi and Alice, leaving their carriage at the splendid gates of gilded iron work, guarded by two tall sentinels in the magnificent and gaudy costume of the Swiss guard, entered the principal avenue. Hundreds of gentlemen in gay court dresses, or rich uniforms sparkling with gold and gems, and fluttering with scarfs and ribbons, and broad laces, were strolling to and fro, in groups or singly, perfuming all the air with the rich scents which were scattered from their waving locks, for the abominable fashion of perukes had not as yet been introduced, and all their heads were bare, as well in compliment to the ladies, many of whom enlivened the bright scene yet further by their graceful presence, as in deference to the young king, who was known to be within the precincts of the garden.

Scarcely had they made a dozen steps

into the garden, before they were recognised and joined by several of the gentlemen who had supped with them on the previous evening, and who appeared determined to lose no opportunity of attaching themselves to the train of one whose beauty they foresaw would elevate her to the rank of a reigning belle in the court of the young and beauty loving monarch. Light, blithe, and sparkling, was the conversation of the gay youths, mingled with many a jest and racy anecdote of this or that great personage who passed or repassed constantly. This was the splendid and voluptuous Fouquet, the celebrated Minister of the Finance, who, though his fall was not far distant, still basked in the meridian favour of the boy monarch—that was Count Antoine Hamilton, the wittiest man where almost all were witty, and that superb and gallant cavalier, who walked beside him jesting and laughing noisily, all blazing with inestimable diamonds—that was the Count de Grammont—and his appearance recalled some recent *bon mot*, which was, of course, retailed, and thus, almost despite herself, between the interest of seeing so many noted persons, and the gay repartees and *jeux de mots*

which were continually flowing round her, Alice was rapidly forgetting her griefs, when she was suddenly called back to them by a group of persons of both sexes which met them, and swept onward in a moment, scarce noticing, if they saw, the young English beauty.

The first person, who walked a step or two in advance of the rest, and was covered, was a young man, well made, and not ungraceful, and with a natural air of dignity, which was not altogether destroyed by the unpleasant expression and harsh features of his dark complexioned, strongly lined, and saturnine countenance. His hair was harsh and coarse, of a deep black, and his eyes, which were quick and expressive, were of the same colour. It was remarkable that the son of two among the handsomest persons in Europe should have been so ungainly, yet so it was—for it was Charles the Second, an exile from the land of his fathers, and a pensioner on the French king's bounty, who passed by laughing indecently and boisterously at some licentious joke, which had just fallen from the lips of Buckingham, or Wilmot, both of whom walked almost beside him, although a step or two behind.

Several other English gentlemen accompanied the thankless master for whom they had bled, and were now in banishment, and three or four ladies; but it was on the last of these, a tall and very beautiful girl, with a high, and, perhaps, somewhat bold style of loveliness, a profusion of magnificent black ringlets, a shape of exquisite voluptuous symmetry, and the unrivalled gait, springy yet slow and lithe and graceful, of a Castilian lady, that the quick eye of Alice rested. It was the same girl, who had ridden past the carriage just as they reached the gates of Paris on the preceding day, and her heart told her in a moment that it was Isabella Oswald. And it was she, superbly habited in a rich robe of emerald velvet, slashed with white satin, and decorated with slight chainwork of wrought gold, with diamonds in her bosom and in her splendid hair; nothing could be more queenly than the whole air and carriage of the proud beauty, as she passed along, leaning upon the arm of the tall grayhaired soldier, whom she had addressed, the previous day, as her father.

"See! see, Mademoiselle de Selby," exclaimed the young Count de Bellefonds, in a loud

whisper, as she swept along, "That is the heroine of Villequier's tale last evening; that handsome black-haired girl."

"Indeed!" said Alice, quietly; "she *is* extremely handsome, certainly. I do not wonder that the gentleman should be somewhat bold to win her."

"Nor I, nor I," replied Bellefonds; "but, as I thought at the time, there was a good deal of romance in our worthy captain's story—the quarrel had nothing to do in the world with the lady—it was merely about some military duty or other. The old man is a very rigid disciplinarian, and is blest with a fiery temper, and was intemperate and violent in his language. Wyvil—by the by, what singular names you English people have! it is almost impossible to speak them,—Wyvil behaved extremely well, and coolly; and all is well arranged, and they are friends again!"

"Oh! I am glad to hear that," replied Alice, as if she had been quite unconcerned; "I am very glad that Major Wyvil conducted himself so well; he is an old friend of ours, although I have not seen him since I have been in Paris."

"Ah! you will see him very soon; he is a great favourite at court,—one of the bravest and most noble of our young officers. I dare say he is in the gardens now; but ha! what have we here?" he added, as a considerable bustle might be observed a little further up the walk, the people hurrying to and fro, and arranging themselves in lines on either hand; then, in a moment, as if in answer to the count's question, there came a cry, "the king! the king! room for the king!" and bowing courteously to all his subjects, and pausing now and then to speak to some one of the more distinguished, the young and splendid prince came slowly down the avenue, attended by a band of courtiers as gallantly attired as can be fancied.

Louis, who was at this time little advanced beyond the term of boyhood, was singularly, ay, wonderfully, handsome; not very tall, but splendidly proportioned, with a fine brilliant countenance of somewhat Roman outline, a forehead all bland expanse, yet broad and massive; an eye, bright, penetrating, and undaunted as the eagle's; a lip which could express an empire's proud authority, but which was now wreathed in a sweet and fascinating

smile; a gait, at the same time, easy and majestic; an air so wonderfully winning, that, when he chose it, no one on earth could resist its imperative seduction. Such, at that period, was the youth, whose name was to be coupled for all ages with every thing that relates to magnificence and grandeur, whether of war and glory, or of pleasure and ostentation; who certainly possessed beyond all others the regal power of winning hearts, as it were, by a word; of gaining, almost by a glance, man's adoration, woman's deep devotion.

Of all the court there was no man so plainly dressed as the young monarch; he wore his own rich chestnut hair in flowing ringlets, a coat of black velvet lined with white satin, with vest and breeches of the same material, without a particle of lace or embroidery, or chain of gold, or jewellery, or any other decoration, except a single star of superb brilliants on the left breast of the doublet, a pair of diamond buckles in his shoes, and a diamond hilt to his court rapier. His eye glanced rapidly from side to side, as he came up the walk, dwelling for a few moments complacently upon any face of more than ordinary beauty; and, when he had come to the

spot where Madame de Gondi stood, he came to a dead stop, looking full at Alice Selby.

"Ha!" he said, "our fair lady of Gondi, methinks you have a new face there! one that we have not seen at our court—one of the fair daughters of the noble house of Retz?"

"Not so, sire," answered Henriette de Gondi, courtesying very low, at this unexpected civility. "A young English lady, a cousin of my dear mother's, who has been forced to fly from her country in consequence of loyalty to her king—Mademoiselle Selby. I had proposed to ask permission to present her to your majesty on your next reception-day. She only arrived in your majesty's capital last evening!"

"We shall be happy always to receive so loyal and so fair a lady," answered Louis, very graciously. "Our lady mother also will be glad to see Mistress Selby." And he was already moving onward, when he appeared to recollect something, and turning short round, "I presume," he said, "you have received our commands, madame, through our lord chamberlain, to attend our ball, this evening, at the Louvre!"

"I have not heard of it, sire," she replied, when he interrupted her.

"Artagnac, then, must have forgotten. Well, now you comprehend; and your fair cousin will accompany you." And, with these words, the ladies courtesying low in token of assent, the monarch and his train swept onward, the former saying, so loud that his words reached the ears of Alice, "Ma foi! Beaugen, these English girls eclipse the brightest of our beauties. I thought the Oswald the handsomest woman I had ever seen, but this fair-haired girl is twenty times more lovely."

A well-pleased smile came over the face of Henriette, as she heard the flattering comment of the king, well knowing that so open an expression of his admiration, would send the whole world of the court to worship at the feet of Alice; and hoping that a reception so distinguished would go far to reclaim the recreant lover. Alice smiled likewise, but it was with a sad and calm expression that spoke of any thing rather than gratified vanity or pride. The gentlemen around did not, however, seem to notice either the smile, or the feelings that gave birth to it; but continued their attentions for some time, strolling the while along the shadowy walks, and pausing now and then by the basin of some brilliant

fountain, until, having remained as long as politeness would permit, one by one, all of them dropped off, pleading some business or engagement as an excuse, and only Bellefonds, who was indeed related to the house of Gondi, felt it his duty to await their pleasure.

After a while, "Well, Alice," said her cousin, "I think we have had enough of this, if Monsieur de Bellefonds will be so good as to inquire for my carriage at the gate, we will sit down and wait for his return in this quiet arbour." The place, of which she spoke, was no more than a nook or green recess, hollowed out of the thickness of a great yew hedge, with a seat capable of accommodating two or at most three persons, overlooking the principal *jet d'eau*, and *carrefour*, the great or common centre from which the several avenues diverged. The gentleman bowed and walked quickly off towards the gate of the Tuileries, and the two ladies sat down in the shade, neither of them for the moment much inclined to talk; for there is a reaction which follows the excitement of very forced and brilliant conversation, as surely as it does excitement of any other kind, and a sort of vague lassitude had crept over both of them, inclining

them rather to think within themselves, than to speak of what had been passing.

It happened to be the case, however, that the same hedge in which the sylvan seat was framed, where they were sitting, was the external boundary of a maze or labyrinth, laid out with rare skill and many intricate and doubtful windings; and exactly behind the spot where Alice sat, another similar recess had been cut, in the thickness of the same hedge, opening to the walk behind, and only separated from the bower in front by a few inches of thick evergreen foliage, sufficient indeed to prevent the eye from discerning any thing beyond, but suffering every word that was spoken to pass through its leafy screen. This seat, the existence of which had been suspected by neither of the ladies, was unoccupied when they first sat down, but scarcely had they been there a minute when they distinguished the footsteps of two persons, one evidently a lady, coming along the walk behind them, and immediately afterwards became aware that they had paused, almost beside them. A moment afterwards the sweet and low-toned voice of a woman was heard saying, " Oh! this is very wrong; I fear that this is very wrong indeed; what will

my father say when he misses me, and finds that you have come off with me?"

"Say? why what should he say, sweet Isabella?" answered a man in tones, each note of which struck to the very heart of Alice, "but that you are a wild one ever, and ran away into the maze, and that I came to seek for you, lest you should lose your way. But, Isabel, it is not you, but I, that have indeed strayed from my road; and, if you will not deign to lead me back, I fear me I am lost for ever. Beautiful, beautiful Isabella, listen one moment; nay! do not turn your head away, nor beat the earth so proudly angry with that small foot; listen, for I must speak. I cannot be confined and cribbed and fettered by their confounded rules of *convenance*, and I must speak and be answered. I adore you! words cannot speak my adoration! and you know it, yes! well you know it, Isabella, and you have smiled on me, and seemed not wholly to despise my suit. Speak then, speak Isabella, and say, can you not love me, will you not be mine?"

The moment she had recognised the voice, Alice grasped Henriette by the arm so rigidly,

that instantly she comprehended what was passing; and, when her cousin would have risen, detained her quietly, yet by a hold so firm that she could not escape from it without creating so much noise as would have reached the ears of the others.

A second or two followed, before any answer was returned by the girl, and there was a sound that might have been either that of weeping, or of suppressed laughter, but, when she spoke, her voice was clear and silvery, and perhaps even pitched somewhat higher than before. "Yes," she said, "Major Wyvil, I will be quite frank with you—I *have* perceived your attentions—nay! chafe not!—your love, if you will—and I will not say that I have perceived them altogether with indifference—but, ere I give my love, I must be certain. And I am not quite certain, sir—I have heard something whispered of love passages in England—something of a fair girl who rescued Captain Wyvil from strange peril, and loved, and was loved in return—methinks."

"Mere talk," Marmaduke answered, interrupting her, "mere empty idle slander! uttered by

fools who know not, or knaves who care not, what they publish! Nay, dearest, loveliest, Isabella, I swear to you that my whole heart is yours—yours only—and for ever! Why she! —she was the merest country girl! I never so much even as thought of her."

"Enough!" whispered Alice, vehemently, "I *will* hear no more," and starting to her feet she hurried out of the little arbour before Henriette had time to hinder her, and went on speaking, when she joined her, not without manifesting strong indignation. "I am astonished at you, ay! astonished, Madame de Gondi—that you should wish me to remain and hear things not intended for my ears—it is unprincipled and base."

"Alice," interposed Henriette, "Alice, you are now angry and very naturally so; the time will come, however, when you will do me justice; I am the last, the very last person alive, who would encourage any one to listen meanly to the words of another; but, in this case, you had unwittingly heard so much that it was absolutely necessary that you should hear more. But you are right in this, you have heard all that

it behoved you to hear; you *have* detected, and *shall* foil, a villain! and, as you say, we had no right to wait or listen for the lady's answer. Now take my arm; here comes de Bellefonds to announce the carriage, and see the gardens are already almost empty."

CHAPTER IV.

THE Louvre, although it had not at this time been rebuilt and decorated by Claude Perrault, de Vau, and Dorbay, as it was a few years later, was a magnificent and stately pile, well worthy to be the residence of a line of great and powerful kings; it contained many vast saloons, and stately halls, splendidly furnished according to the taste of the time. It must not, indeed, be imagined that now, when the revenues of the country had been exhausted, the court impoverished, and the treasury actually emptied, by the long and terrible civil wars which had been raging throughout France, and before the master hand of Colbert had revived the credit, and refilled the coffers, of the state, its furniture and

other appliances of luxury were not so extravagantly sumptuous and grand, as they became in after years, when France had learned to manufacture for herself the mirrors, and the tapestries, the carpets, and the laces, and the velvet, which she was now content to purchase, not far short of their weight in gold, from Venice, the Low Countries, Turkey, and Italy, and Flanders. All was, however, rich, and gorgeous, and magnificent, and certainly far more luxurious than had ever met the eyes of fair Alice Selby. The court was filled by a detachment of the horse body-guard, and their fine band was playing at short intervals, to the great delight of an immense multitude of people who were collected without the gates, the popular and stirring tunes peculiar to the house of Bourbon, "Vive Henri Quatre!"—"La belle Gabrielle."—"O Richard!" and the like, which were received now with tumultuous applause by the same wild and fickle multitude, that had but a few months before fired the cannon of the Bastille on the troops of the very king, whom they now affected to adore.

In the hall at the foot of the great staircase were stationed a small party of officers and gen-

tlemen pensioners with burnished breastplates and broad bladed partisans, and on every landing-place up to the royal antechamber was stationed a subaltern of the guard, in full uniform, with casque and breastplate, sword and musquetoon. Many of the old *Haute Noblesse* had arrived already, and all the officers, civil and military, of the royal household, had come together, when Madame de Gondi entered the palace with her young protegée—the antechamber was filled with gaily-dressed flippant pages, whose long curled hair and blooming cheeks, and dresses rich with brilliant colours, made them resemble girls rather than effeminate youths of the ruder sex, one of whom started forward instantly to receive their names, and pass them onward to an usher who stood leaning on a long gold rod at the door of the principal saloon.

Another moment, and the whole gorgeous scene burst like a fairy vision on the dazzled senses of the young English girl—the long suite of splendid halls, illuminated by vast pendant chandeliers of gold and crystal, the hangings of brocade and velvet, the giant mirrors of Venetian fabric reflecting every object fifty fold, the very atmosphere rendered voluptuous by the

breath of the softest perfumes, and vocal with the dying fall of sweetest instruments. Such was the first impression, a sort of vague bewilderment, that made the head swim, and the heart flutter, and the breath come thick, unmingled with any very clear consciousness or distinct perception of the things that met her eyes. The second thing that struck her, was the apparent fewness of the guests, the effect of numbers being in a great measure lost, owing to the vastness of the apartments, and to the distribution of the company throughout the whole length of the suite; so that, although at the farther end of the long vista, Alice might distinguish by the blazing lustres, which rendered all the rooms as bright as day, a crowd of gay forms wheeling in the slow and graceful dances of the time, she passed in the intermediate halls only a group or two of gentlemen playing at games of hazard on tables laid out for the purpose, and a few pairs, seemingly busied in matters of love or intrigue, seated apart in the luxurious alcoves, or partaking of the delicate refreshments, which were displayed in much profusion.

Madame de Gondi, therefore, hurried her somewhat quickly towards the ball-room, making

no pause at all, except to return the salutations of the gentlemen who recognised her ; scarcely, however, had they reached the ball-room, where, as they entered, the dance was gaily circling, when a gentleman, in a rich dress, stepped forward from the crowd to meet them, exclaiming, " At last, Madame de Gondi ! at last you come to rejoice our eyes, which have been straining all the evening in the hope of descrying you. His majesty has enquired thrice if you had yet arrived; and has commanded Artagnac and myself to bring you to him the moment you should make your entrée !"

" I hope we have not been accused of treason, Monsieur de Broglie," replied Henriette, smiling, " that we should be thus made prisoners by two such *preux chevaliers*, as Monsieur D'Artagnac and the Count Charles de Broglie !"

" Oh ! by no means—by no means, Madame," answered de Broglie, laughing, " unless to pierce the hearts of kings with the shafts of Cupid may be deemed a species of *lèse-majeste.* But, if we understand the matter rightly, his majesty has no thought of making prisoners of you ; but rather, I believe, of offering himself a willing captive to the *beaux yeux* of this fair lady,

whom I have never," he added, half-hesitating as he said it, "enjoyed the happiness of seeing here before."

"I should think not," said Madame, "for she never was in Paris until yesterday afternoon. Alice, my dear, let me make you know the Count Charles de Broglie, in his own estimation the wittiest and best dressed man in France, except the Grammont! Monsieur le Comte, Mademoiselle de Selby."

After bowing and murmuring his compliments, the young lord led them again forward, saying as he did so, "upon my word! if we stay talking here I shall get sent myself to the Bastille, for his majesty was all impatience when he sent me."

By this time, they had reached the upper end of the saloon, where, under a sort of a canopy of cloth of gold and velvet, the king was standing with a number of his great lords about him, and the queen mother, Anne of Austria, seated in a rich chair of state, with a bevy of court beauties ranged behind her—and nothing can be imagined more flattering or courteous than the reception of the two ladies, by the young monarch and his stately mother—a favour, which was

perhaps as much to be ascribed to a piece of policy in honouring one branch of a family so powerful as the house of de Retz, when it had been almost determined to put an end to the ambitious career of another, in the person of the celebrated cardinal, as it was to the king's admiration of a fair face and handsome figure. Be this, however, as it may, the king, after commending the young guest of Madame de Gondi to the attention of his mother, and desiring his lord chamberlain to place her on the list of those to be invited to all the court festivities, actually led her out to dance as his own partner, rendering her thereby a mark for the envy of every woman, and the admiration of every man in the room.

There was, perhaps, never in the world a woman less afflicted with the vice of vanity than Alice Selby—sprung herself from a family of such ancient distinction as to consider herself naturally equal to the highest of her own land, she was not one to be dazzled beyond the bounds of reason even by the condescension of a great king, and she was too intrinsically proud and high-minded to fancy for a moment, that she could gain any thing of real elevation from a

circumstance so purely adventitious; but, notwithstanding all this, there is and must be a natural gratification, and even to the best balanced mind, a sort of pleasurable excitement, in being selected for any honour by the high and noble; and although Alice Selby was, as I have said, as little likely to imagine herself magnified by this contact with a king, as to deem herself disgraced by collision with a beggar,—although she was unhappy, and so sick at heart that, but for a little touch of feminine pride, she would assuredly have preferred the seclusion of her own chamber to the glare of a court ball,—she was yet beyond doubt both pleased and gratified at finding herself the partner of the most distinguished and magnificent prince, the handsomest man, and most accomplished cavalier of the day; and it was owing perhaps no less to this pleasure and excitement, than to the natural self-reliance of a high and well tutored mind, accustomed from its childhood upward to no thoughts, but what were noble and distinguished, that she displayed neither bashfulness nor vanity, neither timidity nor exultation, in circumstances which might well have turned the head of one so unused to society.

Never, perhaps, in her life had she looked more lovely ; gratification, and the slight excitement of the dance, had called up to her cheeks a brighter tinge of the carnation than was natural to her pale pure complexion, her eyes sparkled more brightly, and as her long fair ringlets waved about in the breath created by her own motion, and her beautiful rounded figure swayed gracefully in the varied attitudes of the slow measured dance, nothing could well be fancied more exquisitely beautiful than her, who, at that very moment, was rejected and deserted for one as much inferior to herself in personal charms, as in those higher attributes that constitute the beauties of the mind. It was not long before the royal dance was finished ; and then, although the king, when he had led her back to the queen's circle, where her cousin waited her return, noticed her no more during that evening, except by a passing bow and smile, the proudest and the noblest lords of that proud court vied with each other for the hand of a girl, whom they would have scarcely deigned to see had not the monarch's approbation stamped her indelibly a reigning beauty. Ladies, although they envied

her in secret, sought the acquaintance of one who, they foresaw, must rank with them in all future parties.

Madame de Montbazon, known as the *belle des belles*, and the bright Duchess of Longueville, to win one glance from whose fair eyes courtiers forswore their fealty to kings, and Grammont, peerless in beauty as was her lord in wit, and Mademoiselle de Sçepaux, and Madame de Châtilet, and twenty others, some famous for their present loveliness, some for the reputation of their bygone charms, asked the familiarity and friendship of one whose name they scarcely knew, and of whose claims to distinction they were completely ignorant.

Thus passed the night, and, to speak truly, if all the cares of Alice Selby were not forgotten, they were at least lost, once and again, in the whirl and tumult of the gay sights and merry sounds that were around her,—for such is human nature; and it is by no means incompatible with the pervading sense of a deep, real and ever present grief, to be amused, to laugh, to enjoy wit, and admire beauty,—in short, to be temporarily gay, if not, in truth, happy. And such was now the case with Alice—the stun-

ning blow of the morning had as it were passed away, leaving a dizzy and bewildered sense of ill, which she had not as yet had time fully to comprehend or to realize to her own feelings—and now, plunged as if by magic into the vortex of all that was most gay and witty, most dazzling and seductive, in the gayest city of the world, she could not but yield to the contagion of example, and though at times the question would rise to her mind, "What have I now to do with happiness?"—though the sense of betrayal and desertion would intrude like a ghastly phantom in the midst of revelry and mirth, yet was the question speedily if not satisfactorily answered, yet was the phantom quickly banished by the first happy laugh or sparkling *bon mot.*

It is, moreover, always the first blow alone that pains or shocks the mind or body deeply—the after stings are more easily endured, and the pangs, they create, readily concealed, even although they may be felt severely. The first and stunning blow had been dealt at the supper-table on the previous night, it had been heavily repeated in the gardens, yet although Alice felt it—how bitterly!—she was now

forced to bear, like the Spartan boy, in silence, the pangs that might be gnawing at her vitals. Several times during that night of triumph, as it would have been considered by every woman in the room except her who had enjoyed it, the thought had often crossed her mind whether her faithless lover was a witness, and what would be the effect on his mind, which she could no longer conceal from herself, was worldly, frail, and fickle.

An indistinct and floating hope did occur to her more than once, that his allegiance might be reclaimed by the mere sight of the effect wrought by her beauty upon others; and though, whenever such hopes did arise, she asked herself half scornfully, and half indignantly, "And could I, ought I, to pardon him such baseness, if even he were to return?" she never fairly answered herself in the negative. The evening was waxing late, however, and she had as yet seen nothing either of Wyvil or of Isabella, although she fancied once that she caught a glimpse of the tall form and dignified movement of the lady amid a crowd of courtiers, but before she could distinguish it she was hurried onward, and lost sight of her com-

pletely. And now the hour of supper was approaching, when, just as she had promised her hand for the following dance to the young Count of Bellefonds, she heard the sound of a well-known footstep close behind her, and a voice, every note of which went directly to her heart, exclaimed, "And has not, Mistress Selby, one glance of recognition, one word of welcome, for an old friend?"

She turned her head round quickly, and, not now pale and haggard from long and close confinement, as when he plighted her his faith, but full of health and vigour, and high manly beauty, sumptuously attired, and seemingly in the highest spirits, Marmaduke stood before her. Her cheek, indeed her brow—nay, more, her neck and bosom, and all the smooth expanse of her fair shoulders, were suffused for a moment with a deep crimson blush; but her clear eye retained its natural calmness, and her melodious voice did not falter, as she extended her hand to him frankly, and replied in French, to the words which he had spoken in their own language, in order that de Bellefonds, who was standing by her side, might not conceive himself excluded. "Indeed, I have," she said, "I am

sincerely glad to see you, and Monsieur de Bellefonds here can tell you that I asked after you from him, and expressed my joy at your well doing."

"Well—you will dance with me," he added, "will you not? for I have very much to say to you, and more to ask. I can't guess what brought you hither; come, they are standing up even now."

"I would with pleasure," she replied, "and I will, if you wish it, by and by; but for this time I am engaged to the count here!"

He looked at her steadfastly for a moment, and then said in English in a low voice, "You are changed, Alice, you are changed. You have been flirting here with kings and dukes and barons, until you think a British gentleman beneath your notice."

She gave him one look—*one!* fraught with the whole of her deep mind,—so mild, so tender, and yet at the same time so ineffably reproachful, that his eye sunk beneath it. "Those," she said, "sir, who are the first to suspect change in others, are often wont to change first themselves." This time she also spoke in English, and then turning to Bellefonds,

"*Allons!* she said, "*monsieur le comte*, the dancers are arranged in their places," and with the words, she gave him her gloved hand, and passed onward.

"Beautiful creature!" muttered Wyvil to himself; "more beautiful tenfold!" and then he followed quickly after them, and said in French, as he overtook them, "The next dance, then, the next dance, Mistress Alice will be mine."

"Certainly, if you wish it," she replied, and then the instruments burst forth with a loud symphony, and all the graceful forms started at once into quick motion; and all the while, with his eyes following the figure of the sweet girl whom he had so treacherously abandoned, thinking in his heart how far more lovely she was whether in motion or repose than the gay artificial beauties of the court, and drawing comparisons not very favourable to Isabella Oswald, stood Marmaduke, until the measure was concluded; and, more than half regretting his base fickleness, he received her from the hand of the young French nobleman.

"Now, tell me," he said, "tell me what can

have possibly occurred to bring you to Paris? Where are you staying? and is your father with you?"

"Your letters were intercepted by the government," she answered, "and we are banished England, and all our property sequestrated, for sheltering you after Worcester fight. We only came last night to Paris; my father is with me, and we are staying with my cousin, Madame de Gondi, at her hotel in the Faubourg St. Germain, where we shall all be glad to see you. There, now, do not look so tremendously alarmed, and wobegone, for there is not much harm done after all, except that poor Bartram, or Colonel Penruddock, rather, is desperately hurt and taken prisoner; and I fear, dead ere this; for Cromwell has been very kind, and has made our cousin Chalenor a promise that he will grant us a full pardon in the spring, and restore all our property, so you see that all we have lost is really a gain; for we have had a trip to Paris, and I expect to pass a very pleasant winter.—How very gay the court is; and how many lovely women!

"By the way," she continued, running on very rapidly, for she was, in truth, afraid of his

getting upon subjects too delicate for the time and place—subjects on which, she knew, she could not speak without betraying that agitation which she was most anxious to conceal. "By the way! although this is the first time you have seen *me* since I have been in France, I have been much more fortunate, for you were the very first person I beheld as we were entering the barriers. You galloped past the carriage without seeing us, at which I did not wonder very much, for you were in pursuit of a very pretty lady—one of the prettiest ladies I ever saw. I met her again in the garden of the Tuileries this morning, magnificently dressed in green velvet; who is she? I should like to know, she is so very handsome."

Shrewd as he was, and deeply versed in all the wiles of the artificial world, Wyvil was fairly foiled and puzzled. The perfect coolness of Alice Selby's manner, the absence of any seeming consciousness, such as a girl must naturally feel and show in the presence of her betrothed lover; the evident yet quiet cordiality with which she met him as an old friend, so perfectly unloverlike and free from agitation, were all beyond his comprehension. While at the same

time the very ease and freedom of her conversation forbid him to believe it possible that she could have discovered his disloyalty. He paused a moment, therefore, ere he answered; and when he did so, it was with an air of confusion that did not escape the observation of the interested questioner.

"Do you think her so very handsome?—Rather too dark perhaps—Her name is Isabella Oswald, the daughter of Sir Henry Oswald, a cavalier who left England many years ago, at the first outbreak of the troubles, and has risen to the rank of major-general in the French army."

"Ah! English is she?" replied Alice—"she certainly is very dark to be English—she looks more like a Spaniard or an Italian. Is she as agreeable as she is pretty? I do not see her here to-night."

"How strangely you run on!—You are most strangely altered since I last saw you," exclaimed Marmaduke, unable any longer to conceal his astonishment.

"Am I indeed?" she said. "Well! if I am, it is the way of the world, you know, to alter—but I hope it is not for the worse, that I

am altered. See, they are going to dance again. Let us begin." There were in those days, in the course of the dance, none of those opportunities for conversation which are afforded now by the intervals of the waltz or quadrille, and therefore Marmaduke could press no further his examination into the meaning of Alice Selby's changed and peculiar manner; once, as they met and interchanged hands in the mazes of the graceful measure, he pressed her fingers so closely, that she could not have failed to perceive it; yet neither did she return the gentle pressure in the least degree, nor did she seek to withdraw her hand from his grasp. A slight blush crossed her pale cheek for a moment, but except that, she gave no sign that she had understood his meaning.

The music ceased, the pastime of the evening was at end, all but the splendid banquet, which closed the regal entertainment; and as the guests filed off in order, Alice presented Marmaduke to her cousin, so that although he attended them during the supper, and handed them to their carriage afterward, he got no opportunity of again speaking to her privately,

although before they parted he asked permission, which was granted readily, to visit her to-morrow.

"Well, Alice, well!" exclaimed Madame de Gondi, the moment they were left alone—"What do you think about it now?"

"That he was false, and has half repented of his falsehood," replied the fair girl, with a deep sigh.

"And what then?" asked her cousin, eagerly; "will you forgive the penitent? Say you will, dearest, say you will; in pity to yourself, for I declare I never saw a girl more desperately in love—every look, every movement shows it."

"I must not promise," answered Alice, with a faint smile, "I must not bind myself, for I do not know; I must learn, I must learn how far this has gone. But I fear; I can only say, I fear very greatly."

"Oh! you should never fear; I always hope, always expect the best."

"And are always disappointed; that follows as a thing of course," said Alice.

"Not always! no, not always!" replied Henriette, "for I expected fully to find a very sweet

girl in my cousin Alice, and that she would win the heart of every one who saw her,—and there, you see, I was not at all disappointed, but was quite right; but here we are at home, and I declare it is already almost morning."

CHAPTER V.

In one of the by-streets of Paris, not very far distant from the palace of the Louvre, there was a large old-fashioned house, standing a little way back, with a narrow yard before it, surrounded by an iron railing. The outer door stood open, but just within it there was another scarcely less strong than the first, having a grated wicket in its upper panel, by which the porter, an old invalided soldier, might reconnoitre the faces of all visiters before admitting them. In this large house, as is so much the custom at the present day on the continent, there was one common staircase, with strong doors, one or more on each landing, the several floors being let separately as suites of apartments to travellers, or those natives

who had neither houses of their own, nor the means of maintaining them. On the third floor of this building there was a handsome range of rooms, consisting of an antechamber with a small closet opening from it for a servant, a large saloon, a spacious and luxurious bedchamber, and several smaller apartments for the attendants of a gentleman of consequence; and at a late hour of the night, or it would be perhaps more correct to say early in the morning that succeeded the royal ball, the principal room of the suite was brightly illuminated, and occupied by a person who appeared in no wise inclined to sleep, though all the rest of the inhabitants of the great city were buried in deep slumber.

The room, as I have said, was large and airy, with windows reaching to the ground, and well furnished with a rich carpet on the floor, and hangings on the walls; two or three slabs and tables of various forms were ranged against the panels, or occupied the central space, covered with Persian carpets, and littered with a variety of articles for use and show, some ornamental vases, and other specimens of the antique, that might have charmed a virtuoso, papers and books and instruments of music, two or three swords

with their embroidered baldrics, a plumed hat, gloves with silver fringes, a scarlet mantle heavily laced with gold, and many other things which seemed to designate the occupant for a man of elegant and intellectual tastes, a soldier, and a gentleman. Over the mantelpiece was hung a richly-chased and inlaid musketoon, and a pair of long horseman's pistols with Spanish barrels, at that time the most famous in the world; and upon wooden hooks, along the wall facing the windows, were several cuirasses of bright steel, two polished head-pieces, and several pairs of gauntlets; and below them three of the long straight double-edged swords peculiar to the cavalry of the period.

A little fire of wood was burning on the hearth, for though the autumn was not yet very far advanced, and the days were yet warm, the nights were chilly; and near the fire there had been placed a small round table, with a silver lamp, a writing-desk bestrewn with notes and letters, most of them written in a feminine hand, and among these a miniature portrait in enamel of an exceedingly beautiful girl, with dark hair and eyes, and a marked aspect of voluptuous boldness. A large arm-chair stood close to the table, as if some one

had just occupied it; but it had been pushed a little way back, and Marmaduke Wyvil, for it was to him that those rooms belonged, was walking to and fro the floor, with rapid and irregular strides, his face all pale and bloodless, his eye full of a wild and anxious restlessness, and his arms folded on his breast, with the hands tightly clenched. Several times he walked up and down, pausing at each turn, and standing still beside the table for a little while, gazing upon the letters and the miniature, although there was but little speculation in the fixed stare with which he regarded them, and although he seemed hardly conscious how he was occupied. At last he caught the picture up, and gazed upon it earnestly.

"Lovely!" he said, "ay! it is very lovely! but, after all, it is the loveliness of a *bona roba* rather than of a wife, and when you see them both together, she is not half so truly beautiful. I marvel how I could have so forgotten!" He paused again for a moment or two, and casting down the portrait half disdainfully, "Curses!" he muttered between his teeth, "curses upon it! this comes of playing double! Both won, ay! both, and now perchance both lost! and then,

and then?"—and he resumed his hurried strides, smiting his forehead with his hand as he did so, and muttering stifled imprecations.

He soon, however, became tired of pacing and repacing the apartment, and again threw himself into the chair, covering his face with both hands; after a little while he again started up, and nothing could more thoroughly display the perturbation and the agony of his mind, than did the sharp and keen and haggard look which had come over his smooth features, changing him in the space of a few hours from a fresh-looking fair young man, to a pale conscience-stricken spectral-looking personage.

"Let me think," he said, as he did so, "I must think, for there is every thing to gain, and more than all to lose. Let me think!" and he did think very long and deeply, and though he spoke no more aloud, he muttered to himself often, and his thoughts shaped and arranged themselves in words and sentences almost as definite as those which he had just before enunciated. "This girl," so ran his anxious meditation, "this artless and unsophisticated girl! what can it mean? I do not understand. By heaven! no regular town beauty accustomed for long years to all the ho-

mage, all the gay flattery of courts, could carry it more easily. So calm—so self-possessed—so graceful! Can she have heard? Can she suspect? No! no! it is not possible; there would have been wrath, indignation, jealousy! No! no! she could not so have met me, could not have so conversed with me, and that too touching Isabella, had she dreamed only that she was her rival, her successful rival! and yet in what—in what is there comparison or rivalry? In what? In nothing. She must—she shall be mine!"

And with the thought he sprang up from his chair, and began once more to stride with heavy and irregular steps to and fro the saloon, till he stopped once again and said aloud, "And what then—what with Isabella? her fiery, Spanish temper, when she shall find herself deserted! there will be no restraint, no curb upon its fury! no corslet that could ward off her sharp vengeance! and it was but to-day—this cursed day! doubly cursed to-day! that I committed myself to her, beyond all retractation. And if I could retract, would Alice hear me? There was no love in her cool eye, no consciousness either of injury endured, or of remaining tenderness, or of premeditated wrong. All calm as if we had

been ever friends, more than friends never! Oh! I am edged about with toils on every side, beset, betrayed; thousands of devils! ruined, ay! ruined beyond hope! my estates forfeited, ay! and the very hope of their restoration gone; sold to the pestilent Jews; lost! lost! beyond redemption!

"Ha!" as a sudden thought, as if by inspiration, flashed upon him; "ha! but Sir Henry might refuse—might—would? By heaven, I have observed it in his eye, his voice, his manner! and till this night that was my terror; that which shall be my preservation. He knows, too, or suspects, I fancy, that I am given somewhat to those infernal cubes of bone—those devilish dice! but if I once succeed, I have done with them for ever. Ay, that is it; seek out a quarrel with Sir Henry, and find in that a cause for rupture with this bold beauty. Had I but known this somewhat sooner, I might have won her without marriage; but that is too late now. She is the richer, though—tush! Woolverton is worth three thousand, every pound of it, in yearly rent; and the old gray-beard scholar, simple as any child and unsuspicious. It is the better, the better every way. And Alice! ay, sweet Alice! in good truth she

is the only woman I ever looked upon that was worth love;—love, ay, I do love her—have loved her always. Although necessity, and opportunity, and this girl's beauty, blinded me for a while, there needed but one tone of her soft voice—one glance of those sweet eyes, to argue me of guilt! of madness! but it shall soon be ended! This morning I will see her; this morning seal my recantation, and then the rest will be soon managed."

He took a few more turns about the room, then entered his bedchamber hastily, and, pulling off his boots, threw himself down without undressing further, and wearied both in mind and body, soon forgot all his plots and cares in profound slumber. The sun was high in the heavens, and the streets of Paris had been filled for several hours with all their dissonant and ceaseless din, before he summoned his attendants, and, dressing himself with unusual care, ordered his horses, and sat down to amuse himself during their preparation, by dallying with his morning meal.

Alice, meantime, on her return from the ball had been met by a strange and glad surprise; for scarcely had she reached the head of

the great staircase, before her girl Margaret came running out full of a wild and flashing joy, with her eyes sparkling, "Oh! Mistress Alice, they have come—I am so glad—so glad —they have all come!"

"Who have come, Margaret? what in the world ails you?" asked Alice, greatly astonished, and half frightened.

"Why, General Henry, Mistress Alice; and Master Fletcher, the steward, and Antony and Matthew Harland, and Frank Norman, who used to live with the Lord Fairfax. The general was up stairs with Master Selby for an hour or better, soon after you went hence."

"Well! this is good news, Margaret," Alice replied. "Did you see General Henry?"

"Oh, yes! I saw him, and he knew me instantly, and left word with me that he would call to see you very early—at nine o'clock. So you had better go to bed directly, or you will never be astir in time to see him. And all the folks are well at Woolverton, except poor old Dame Rainsford, who has been dead some time; and good John Sherlock is striving hard to get Marian—but Marian will never wed any more I think."

"Never, indeed," said Alice, with a sigh, "she has loved once too deeply!" and, without saying any more, she suffered the girl to undress her, and lay down, but she continued sleepless until within an hour of the time when Margaret had been ordered to awaken her. When she slept at last, her sleep was restless and uneasy; and, when she rose, her face was extremely pale, and its expression painful and exceedingly unlike its usually calm and serene character. The glance of her eye too, as her maid observed, was uncommonly bright and glassy, and, ere she had been long up, a round defined spot of hectic crimson settled on either cheek, and remained there throughout the day, an evidence of the strong conflict that was at work within.

Chaloner arrived, as he had promised to do at an early hour, and was, as ever, all that was kind, affectionate, and noble. He was, he told her, on his way to the Hague, whither he had been appointed as a special envoy to their High Mightinesses, for the purpose of demanding reparation of wrongs and outrages done to the British commissioners, by certain royal refugees; and had been induced to take Paris on

his route, partly on business of the State, and partly from the wish of seeing her, and communicating to her in person the agreeable tidings that a full pardon had been made out in due form to herself and Master Selby, accompanied by a reversal of the decree of sequestration, "So that your property is all restored to you," he said, "after a very brief alienation, during which you will find that it has suffered no diminution or detriment whatever. I have likewise obtained a full indemnity and permission to return to England at his pleasure for your friend, Major Wyvil, whom I shall endeavour to see to-day, in order that I may congratulate him on his fortune. For your good father, my dear Alice, has told me every thing; and I know that he is to be the owner of that hand and heart, to which I once so foolishly aspired. But it is the best as it is. Even as all the things of the Great Maker's planning are better than the fitful dreams of mortals! and I thank Him that it is so; that I can freely and fully wish you all that happiness which you so merit, without one feeling of bare envy, or weak repining, at the success of another; who, I can well believe, is better fitted far than I to make you

happy. I feel that had I won that heart and hand, they would have all unspirited me for the vocation to which I am unerringly devoted, my country's service; there is nought now to distract me from my single line of duties, and I believe and feel, that I shall be as happy in following out what I know to be the right course, as you, I trust, will be in that sphere to which God has called you."

"Oh! Henry," replied Alice, affected almost to tears—"Ever the same! the same pure, noble, excellent!—I thank our God most fervently and truly, that you *are* happy—and I doubt not you will be happier tenfold in your high course, than any being, so poor and frail as I, could have made you by love, had it been mine to give—but—but"—and her voice faltered for a moment, till with a little effort she recovered herself, and spoke quite firmly—"I think you are mistaken—I do not much believe that I shall ever be the bride of Major Wyvil."

"How!" exclaimed Chaloner—"How! not the bride of Wyvil?—why it was but last night that your father—Alice," and his whole clear and noble face lightened with glorious indigna-

tion—"this man, whom you rescued from destruction, wellnigh at the price of your own ruin—this man has not—can not have dared to slight you?"

"Cousin," said Alice, quietly—"dear cousin Henry, you must now ask me nothing—be sure, that, should poor Alice Selby require defence or aid, there is no arm on earth from which she would so gladly seek it, as his who did once save her;—but there is no cause now—not even why I should ask advice—and, trust me, I know well how to provide for my own dignity, and happiness, and honour."

"Indeed you do," Chaloner answered, his wonted calmness conquering the brief passion—"I never doubted it, so far as dignity or honour—the way of these is clear, and not to be mistaken by an eye, which takes, like yours, truth for its only lamp. But happiness!—happiness, Alice—men often toil to win what they deem happiness, and, when won, find it anguish!—But this I cannot understand—you loved him once—"

"You cannot, Henry, you cannot," she replied; "but I did love him, or perchance I had loved a better man, if not a brighter—and I *do*

love him yet, and I shall love him while I live —but Henry—do you remember how my mother died? look at my cheek and eye, and see if you cannot read therein the signs of the same sure destroyer."

He started—for with the words a terror, amounting almost to conviction, flashed on his soul; and he believed almost that her foreboding was prophetic—he tried, for a little space, to conquer this depression—to give the conversation a more cheerful tone, but it was useless all—and, ere long, he departed with a promise to revisit her in the evening, "when," he added, as he left the room, "I trust I shall find you with better and more cheerful spirits; for I feel sure that you are over-tired, and you had better take some rest." But, as he descended the great stairs, he muttered to himself, "There is more, there is something more in this! I fear he is a villain—I will watch! I will watch! It is providential that I came here. I will see St. Eloy—I fancy he can tell me, or find out—I will see St. Eloy, forthwith!" Thus saying he reached the door, and was just going down the steps into the yard, where his horses waited for him, when a young cavalier,

gorgeously dressed, but rather in the English than the French fashion, and mounted on a superb charger, entered the *porte-cochère*, and, throwing his rein to one of his attendants, leaped to the ground, came quickly up to the door, and face to face stood Henry Chaloner, and the very man on whom his thoughts were running at the moment.

"Ha! Major Wyvil—I believe," said Chaloner, raising his hand quietly to his hat, "the last time we met was in a hotter place."

"I do not recollect at all," Marmaduke answered; "I am Major Wyvil, very much at your service—but I do not recollect when we have met before; nor have I even now the happiness of knowing whom I am addressing."

"We met last, sir," Chaloner answered, "upon Worcester field—on different sides it is true—and I had the honour of exchanging two cuts and a thrust with you, till we were parted by the mêlée—but all that is now ended happily—my name is Henry Chaloner; and as I understand we are soon to be cousins, I hope we may be good friends. I believe I speak to my fair kinswoman Alice Selby's destined husband.—I had a cause for speaking to you now, sir—since,

in consideration of what I heard and believed true, I was induced to apply to the person who now virtually governs England, and, having some weight with him, I am very happy to say that I succeeded in obtaining from him the full pardon of Major Marmaduke Wyvil, with permission to return home at his own will and pleasure. If you will do me the favour to call at my lodging—General Chaloner's lodging in the rue Royale, I will give you the document formally sealed and witnessed. In the mean time I will not detain you from more fair society. Give you good day, sir," and bowing in reply to Wyvil's profuse thanks and acknowledgments, he mounted his horse and rode silently away.

The face of the other brightened with exultation.—"Free pardon!"—he exclaimed aloud—"and full permission to return! and Woolverton, and Alice Selby!" he added, in a lower tone. "Fortune thou *art* a goddess!" He entered the house, and giving his name to a servant, was immediately ushered into the presence of Alice, who was waiting alone to receive the visit that was to determine her fate for ever. The meeting of the lovers, was not as such meetings are,

or should be; both were confused, embarrassed, almost cold; but Alice was the first to recover herself, and she spoke, as was natural to her frank and open disposition, freely at once, and to the point.

"I am glad you have come here to-day," she said, "Major Wyvil, for I have much to say to you, and hear from you; and I will pray you—"

"But why so cold," he vehemently interrupted; "why so calmly and bitterly cold, Alice? Why 'Major Wyvil?' time was when I was Marmaduke. Is it, can it be possible, that Alice Selby, the pure and true, and tender Alice Selby, can have so fallen off from her pledged faith, so utterly forgot the vows she swore not one year past; so totally overcome the love she once professed?"

"Professed!"—exclaimed Alice, her beautiful eyes flashing fire—"Professed!—No, Marmaduke it is not—it is not possible—no word of it is possible or true—and *that* no man more surely knows than you do. I did, as you say, plight my faith, and from that faith *my* soul has never swerved, no, not so much as a hair's breadth; never will swerve while the life quivers in my veins—Nay! hear me out, for I must speak!

—I did, as you say, *profess* to love you—for, as you know too well, I did—did love you. Oh! you *cannot* know how deeply!—But let me ask you now—and I adjure you, answer me frankly, truly, freely—so may all yet be well—God is my gracious judge, that I ask it in no mean spirit of suspicion or vain jealousy, but in that I have heard things that must, nay, *will* be heard and must be answered. Have *you*, Marmaduke Wyvil, have you not fallen from the faith you pledged to me at Woolverton?—Have you not forgotten so utterly the vows you then swore, as—I say not to flirt or toy or trifle—but to pledge solemn vows to another?—Have you not so overcome the love, which you once felt for me—for I believe that you *did* feel it—as to lose sight of me in absence and give your heart up to another?—Pause! pause! I beseech you, and answer truly; and above all fear not too harsh a judge in your poor Alice—for my heart yearns toward you, Marmaduke, with an undying love—and I would fain be yours, if yours I may be honourably, in this life and for ever!"

He did pause—he did reflect—and the bitter spirit, that was for the time awakened in him,

half-prompted, half-persuaded him to own the truth, to confess his brief hallucination, to throw himself at her feet, and implore her pardon—but, no! he thought, no! woman cannot forgive such errors, and then he proudly raised his head, and, though his soul quailed in him with the dread sickening sensation of conscious guilt and baseness, he proudly answered—with a lie!

"Never," he said; "never, so help me He who looks on all things! No, never!" and he went on so rapidly heaping asseveration on asseveration, that she could not, although she wished it, interrupt or check him. "I may, as you say, have laughed, and danced, and whispered light nonsense in ears that believed it not; but never—on my salvation, Alice, never has my faith even wavered; never has vow been plighted, or love felt by me, for any girl or woman, saving you only, Alice—"

"Have you done?" she exclaimed, almost fiercely; "have you done now? Never to Isabella Oswald? Oh, think, think, Wyvil, ere you speak, think and beware; for I have heard and seen, and know—"

"Never! Oh, Alice, I swear never! I will swear—"

"Swear nothing!" she looked at him with an air of majesty so perfect and so grand, that he could not brook it, but cowed before her like a whipped and whimpering hound; "you have already sworn too deeply, and too falsely. Oh, traitor, traitor, traitor! alas, that I should so have loved you; that I should even now, knowing you base and false beyond conception, still love, almost adore, you! No words, no word, but listen! I sat yester evening in a green bower of the Tuileries — there is another unseen bower just behind it—and thither, while I sat, thither came Isabella Oswald, and there did Marmaduke Wyvil swear to her—ay, you pale now and tremble—as treacherously as he swore to-day to me, that he had never loved—had never even thought of Alice Selby! *Her* answer I heard not. Oh, Wyvil, Wyvil, you know not how devoted a heart you have cast off from you for ever! Even to-day, had you frankly owned your error—had you convinced me it was but a temporary and involuntary treason — had you shown me that her happiness was not jeoparded by you —even to-day, I

had taken you to my bosom—I had said all is forgotten—all is forgiven—let us be happy, Marmaduke. But now—"

"Oh! say so—say so now," exclaimed Wyvil, falling upon his knees before her.

"Kneel not to me," she said, "kneel not to me, but to the Great God, whom you have so grievously insulted!" but he went on, quite disregarding her interruption; "It is all as you have said. It was mere frenzy—the wild frenzy of a moment!"

"Degrade yourself no more," she replied, in a voice wherein no touch of passion, anger, or pity, or contempt, was audible; but slow, and even, and majestic, as one might imagine the voice to have sounded from the oracular tripod. "Degrade yourself no more, but leave me. Strive not, speak not; your case is hopeless. Not for the empire of the universe would Alice Selby marry a man whom she thoroughly despises. And I, Marmaduke Wyvil, the words must be spoken, I love you still; I shall for ever love you. I shall rejoice to hear of your well-being, of your well-doing, of your repenting, of your becoming, what I too deeply fear you never will, an upright, honourable man!

but I do thoroughly, ay, utterly, despise you. A cowardly, base LIE! sworn to two trusting women! Oh! you have filled my heart with fire! Oh! you have heaped my head with ashes! Blighted my young fresh life; left me no hope, nor aim, nor object, but only a long solitary waste of weary days to traverse; a long sad pilgrimage to travel, unlightened by a gleam of love, unaided, and forsaken, before I may rest in the grave! All this have you done to me; yet I forgive, I love, and I will pray for you. Begone! begone! and commune with your own soul in silence; repent, and prosper! No syllable of what has passed between us will I breathe ever to any mortal ear, so long as you insult me not with your addresses. Speak one word now to shake my resolution! presume to persecute me with your love hereafter, and I will blazon forth your infamy to the world, if my heart break in uttering it. Begone!—farewell! farewell for ever!"—Goaded by the stings of that dread conscience, which is a more terrible avenger than the blood-hunting and serpent-locked *Eumenides*, he rushed forth from her presence with the undying worm already gnawing at his

heart strings; while she, deserted by the strength that had so nerved her in his presence, drew a long sob, and fell to the ground senseless; and lay there, till she was found, cold and unconscious, by Madame de Gondi, who, seeing the precipitate departure of the false lover, and therefrom foreboding evil, came hurriedly to seek her, barely in time to bring her once more to that long act of agony which is called life by mortals.

CHAPTER VI.

MANY days passed before Alice Selby was sufficiently recovered to leave her chamber; a fever had attacked her, produced by anxiety and undue excitement, and, for a considerable portion of the time, she was quite delirious. By degrees, however, and by dint of continual and kind watching, she was enabled to rise and return to her ordinary avocations and amusements, although it was still considered improper that she should leave the house. It could not fail, moreover, to be seen by the least interested that she had been indeed fearfully shaken by the brief illness she had undergone, or perhaps by the causes which had produced it. Her slight but rounded figure had lost

much of its graceful contour, her lovely eyes were sunken, but at the same time, there was a clear and glassy glitter in their orbs, a cold transparent lustre, that tells too surely the presence in the vitals of that dread minister of death, fatal consumption. All healthy colour had deserted her pale face, and in its place glared the full hectic spots now permanently fixed, as though they had been branded upon each cheek-bone. She was extremely weak, moreover, and a slight husky cough would at times shake her for a moment, and those profuse night perspirations, most fatal signs of all that mark the progress of the insidious slayer, reduced her, as it might be said, to a shadow of her former self. Every one noted the sad change, even the meditative unobservant scholar; and though he spoke not on the subject, it might be seen by the wistful gaze which he would rivet for hours together on her face, as she sat reading, or employed in some feminine occupation, near him, and by the sad and hopeless air with which he would shake his thin gray locks, and mutter half-heard words, "it was thus with her mother."

Madame de Gondi saw at once, and appreciated fully the whole extent of the evil, and she alone, it may be said, knew really the secret cause; for, although Selby himself much suspected that Wyvil had betrayed and deceived her, he did not know at all the circumstances which had occurred; nor was he aware even that she and Marmaduke had met since their arrival in the French capital. Chaloner, who was yet more suspicious, and who had ascertained beyond doubt, from his friend, the old Marquis de St. Eloy, himself the father of a very lovely child, who was sought in marriage by Wyvil's friend, Bellechassaigne, that Marmaduke had been paying very undue attentions to Isabella Oswald, and who knew that he had been with Alice immediately before her seizure, was yet unable to make up his mind as to the exact truth, and, till he could do so, was perfectly determined neither to act, nor even to speak on the subject.

Meantime, driven to desperation by his detection, goaded by poverty and threatening creditors, and maddened by the cool contempt of Alice, Wyvil had pressed his suit more

eagerly with Isabella Oswald, and had, indeed, succeeded in winning her consent, although her father, suspecting somewhat the necessities and addiction to play of the young soldier, had as yet refused his permission. The report, notwithstanding, had been spread abroad, and gained strength every day, that they were actually betrothed, and that the wedding would take place, almost immediately. Aroused at length by this hourly growing rumour, Chaloner made his mind up fully to a task, to which he naturally felt the strongest possible repugnance; but he was satisfied that Alice, whom he still loved with more than a brother's love, was slowly dying, and that the only hope of saving her lay in the compassing her union with the man, whose perfidy was slaying her, as surely as the immortal sword; and therefore he resolved if possible, to fathom the causes of their alienation, and having fathomed them, to strive with all the powers of his mind for their removal.

Nothing, perhaps, could be conceived more morally heroical, than the self-sacrificing and disinterested resolution of this pure-minded upright man, to defeat for ever all his own chances

of domestic happiness, and to bestow the idol of his own affections, so to secure her ultimate felicity, upon another; but few men have lived in any age less selfish, or more careful of the feelings of all his fellow-creatures, than Henry Chaloner, and it would as easily have entered his mind to prefer the transitory bliss of mortal life, to the beatitude of immortality, as to hesitate between securing his own happiness or that of the woman, he so truly loved and honoured.

In his first efforts he was foiled utterly; for, with his customary frank straightforwardness, he went one morning to visit Wyvil in his lodgings, which he readily discovered, taking with him the pardon he had procured for him which Marmaduke had never called to receive. Wyvil received him courteously, and displayed much gratitude for the obligation under which Chaloner had placed him; and, during a brief conversation on various subjects which ensued, contrived to impress his rival with a far higher estimate of his qualities both of heart and head, than he had before entertained. But when at last Chaloner asked him plainly whether he had been misinformed concerning the fact that

there existed an engagement between him and Mistress Alice Selby, he replied instantly with a grave and somewhat altered air, but not without a show of frankness, "Indeed, General Chaloner, that is a question which to any person but yourself I should decline to answer; even if I did not look on it as a rudeness, but taking it into consideration that you have lately done me no small favour, and that you are a near connexion of a lady to whom it is owing altogether that I am alive at this moment to acknowledge all her excellence, I shall not hesitate to reply to you frankly. You were not misinformed, that such an engagement did once exist, but if you were told that it does so at present, you were assuredly deceived, for it was annulled some time ago, by the lady's own act—more than this you cannot, I think, ask of me to declare."

"Not under ordinary cases," answered Chaloner, after a moment's thought, "could I do so—nor, I admit, can I *demand* it of you now—but you must allow me to point out two or three reasons, why I may ask some farther information. In the first place, with the exception of her father, I am her nearest blood relation. I

may say her only one—and he, as you know, from age and infirmities, and from his own peculiar habits, is hardly capable of guardianship. In the second place, I know that she did love you very deeply—and I am well assured that even now she has not lost that sentiment. I cannot, therefore, but regret deeply this alienation, and I am very anxious to ascertain the causes, in order that, if possible, I may remove any misunderstanding between two persons, one of whom I love very dearly, and the other I am disposed to think well of, and befriend as far as lies in my power. Therefore I am frank with you, and request you to afford me any further insight into this perplexed matter, which you can do with honour."

"You push me hard," replied Wyvil, rather warmly, "too hard, I think, General Chaloner. Most men would hesitate to admit at all that they had been rejected suitors of any lady, how beautiful soever. But this, it seems, is not enough for you, and you expect me to disclose circumstances to you of the most private nature, and to explain things, which, for aught you know, may depend on mere womanish caprice."

"Do you mean, Sir," Chaloner sternly inter-

rupted him, "to cast the shadow of a shade upon my cousin's reputation? Do you mean to accuse her of what you choose to call mere womanish caprice, the right name of which is base, unwomanly dishonesty and faithlessness?—or did I misapprehend you?"

"Again! again!"—answered Wyvil, very haughtily, and something with an air of one not indisposed to seek a quarrel. "What if I did mean so?—I am not to be questioned as to my terms, particularly when such terms are given in answer to a question of your own, which, give me leave to say, was neither warranted by gentlemanly courtesy, nor by the length or intimacy of our acquaintance. I am not in the least accountable to you, Sir; and if I should refuse to reply altogether, I should but do rightly. But I do not refuse," he added, for a deep sense of the baseness of his conduct came across him, and he felt that he could not add to his villany the guilt of laying any imputation on the faith of one, whom he knew to be all purity and truth. "No! I do not refuse, for I esteem the lady's character, and honour her too highly, to wish to cast the slightest blame on her—besides I could not do so truly. For she

is not in any way to blame, unless it be in undervaluing the love and devotion of a person who was once most sincerely attached to her."

"*Once!*" replied Chaloner, "then am I to understand you are so no longer?"

"You are to understand, sir, precisely whatsoever it pleases you. For, by heaven! I will be plagued no further, or I might say insulted. Another question I shall look upon as a direct affront; on other topics I shall be ever willing to converse with General Chaloner—but upon this, let it be understood we speak no more."

Beyond this, of course, Henry could not urge him, and he almost immediately departed, saying, "Ay! ay! he has behaved ill to her in some way or other; and would not now be sorry to cut the gordian knot with the sword; but how—how can he so have injured her, as to have made her so determined in her wrath against him?"

To apply to the aged father, who now appeared to be more broken down than ever, both in spirits and perception of external things, would have been worse than useless, and, therefore, as a last resort, he once more went to Alice, and with the greatest tenderness

and caution, approached the delicate subject, and with an air so kind and so considerate, that she felt no shock to her senses, torn as they had been, and wounded by the discovery she had made of that man's complete worthlessness, on whom she had set all her hopes.

"Henry," she said deliberately, "I cannot tell you; I cannot tell any person all—but this much I can say, in justice both to myself and Wyvil. He is not so to blame as you imagine—he made no pledge to me which he was not ready, nay, eager to redeem—he would, I have no doubt or question, be more delighted than words can express, if I would recall him to my feet to-morrow. But, although, I regret to say it, I love him still, and shall love him to the last; I would not be his wife—no! not to ensure every thing of happiness that gratified love could afford!—I would not—if I would, I could be to-morrow. Him I neither blame, nor acquit—if he have wronged me, in his own heart and conscience lives my avenger. If I do him injustice in my thoughts, I will do him none with my tongue; and, sure I am, I shall find pardon for all the evil I have ever thought or done to him, both here and hereafter!"

"The evil you have done him! The evil!" exclaimed Chaloner—"*you*, who have never wronged a worm!—*you*, whose life has been but one scene of kindnesses, and charities, and goodwill toward all men!—*you*, who preserved his life at peril of your own—sheltered him when his next of kin would have abandoned or betrayed him!—you, whom his treachery—for I cannot be hoodwinked or deceived—is hourly killing."

"Peace! Henry, peace!" replied the sweet girl—"you, who are so calm ever, and so gentle, must not be rash now, or excited—we must not talk of this again; and, I beseech you, do not you speak of it, or lay aught to his charge, or seek to punish any fancied faults. This I entreat of you, as, perhaps, the last prayer of one whom you love, and who would, if she could, have given you love for love. But hearts are stubborn things, dear Henry, and deceitful. I could not *love*, whom I esteem and honour above all men—I cannot *honour*, whom I love the best, I say not of all men, but of all beings except my God and my Redeemer. I love him still, and I cannot but love him, although I may have little cause; but Alice Selby

marries not whom she may not respect—nor ever, while she lives, will sacrifice one jot of principle to a whole world of passion. The struggle may, and *will*, for I feel that I am already within the shadows that float over the dark vale of death—*will* be too much for this weak frame. The seeds of hereditary disease, latent till now, but still existing at the core, are springing into weeds baneful to human life. A few more weeks, perchance a few more days, and this corruptible will be with the worm its sister, this incorruptible with its Creator. Yet, Henry Chaloner, mourn not for me, when I shall have gone hence ; my life has been, it is true, but a brief one—but, oh ! how calm and happy—except this one short storm, it has been like one summer's day of breathless innocent delight. I have lived very happily; I have no consciousness of any very flagrant wrong ; I live in all humility and knowledge of my own unworthiness, yet, in all confidence in the illimitable mercies of my Judge and Saviour, I shall die in tranquil hope, fearless and calm, and go, I trust, unto my God rejoicing !"

" Most happy, and most holy !" answered

Chaloner, amid his tears, for the sweet resignation of the dear dying girl had called forth from their springs the hot tears of the self-restrained and philosophic man; "God grant that I too may so meet his summons, and God forbid that I, by word or deed, or thought, or sign, or motion, should recall one imbittering thought into a spirit from which the bitterness of life and death would seem already to have passed away. Trust me, dear Alice."

"I do, indeed—most confidently I do trust you—but let us speak of this a little farther. I know and feel that I am dying; I know and feel, as surely as that we are speaking here together, that I shall no more see my country—no more tread the free soil of glorious England—no more revisit the dear scenes of my childhood—the cradle of my happy infancy. The leaves that are now rustling on those sere boughs will not have fallen before I shall have departed to the long last home of mortals. When I, and he, who will not long survive me, shall have gone hence, our race, our very name, will be ended—and you, dear Henry, will succeed to our inheritance and dwelling-place. I need not say to you be kind to the old man. I

need not say cherish my poor old pensioners, watch over those who will then have lost their only earthly friends and protectors. These things I need not ask, knowing right certainly that unasked you will do them. But there are two things that I would fain request; first, Henry, it is in truth a vain and foolish wish, but yet it is heart-fixed, and daily it grows stronger as my term draws more nigh. I would when all is over lie in my native land. There is in the churchyard at Woolverton, a large and lovely linden covering many a yard with the shades of its o'erbowering foliage, and under it a little grassy knoll, where many a day I have sat when I was a merry careless child, and even then I used to think it would be sweet to lie in that pleasant spot.

"There, Henry, if it can be accomplished, I would wish my bones to rest; my second prayer is, though perhaps more difficult, less whimsical, and has a reason for its base. It is that you will live some portion of each year at Woolverton, that so you may learn to know the poor and lowly neighbours, who have been wont in our days to look up to their landlords as to trusted and familiar friends. I do not ask you to make

any promise. I do not wish to bind or fetter you at all, but telling you what I desire, I am quite sure that you will do it if it be right and compatible with graver duties, and if it be not, then would I not have it done at all! And now that we have finished this unpleasant topic, let it be finished altogether, and for ever; let us no more think or speak of it, but talk of pleasanter and gayer matters; I would not have my last days spent in sadness or repining, nor the last thoughts of me connected, in the minds of those I love, with dark and gloomy images. So tell me now, when do you think of starting for the Hague?"

"Oh! not for some time, Alice," he replied; "I have to wait instructions, and receive answers to the despatches which I have sent home."

And, for some time, the conversation flowed on, Madame de Gondi having come in, turning on topics of general and varied interest, till just as Chaloner was about to depart, and had actually taken up his hat, the sound of a carriage was heard entering the *porte-cochère*, and, in a moment, the door was thrown open by a servant, who, to the surprise of all parties,

announced Mademoiselle Oswald. Though wondering not a little what had procured her the honour of this visit, Madame de Gondi advanced courteously to meet her, welcoming her with a polished ease peculiar to herself.

"You must think me exceedingly odd, not to say impertinent," she began, as if aware that her coming needed some explanation, "but the truth is, that I heard you had a countrywoman of my own living with you; and I consider it a sort of duty among English ladies to seek out one another when abroad, and offer any little courtesies in their power; and so, being the older resident in Paris, and almost an *habitué*, I took the liberty of calling, in the hope to gain Mistress Selby's friendship. There, the whole secret's out now! I always do things in my own way—and do whatever I choose too," she added, tossing back the luxuriant ringlets which had fallen forward over her face, with a saucy air; "and, in the present case, I choose, Mistress Alice Selby, that we should become great friends instantly, and without ceremony."

Abrupt, and even rough, as was Isabella Oswald's manner, there was yet a sort of gay and open frankness, a distinctness of purpose

and an apparent singleness of heart, that, coupled to her exceeding beauty, and to the peculiar richness of her full silvery voice, was any thing rather than unattractive. It had, perhaps, scarcely so powerful an effect on women as on the other sex, who were almost always singularly struck and fascinated by her manner, but it was still far from lacking its due weight. Alice, particularly feminine herself, and gentle, was very much struck by an air so exactly the reverse of her own, and, although she by no means admired that dashing independence which she considered, and considered justly, to be no attribute of woman, she saw and felt at once that her great beauty, with its bold and striking style, and her wild fearless manners, were just the thing to seize on a mind like Wyvil's, which had, perhaps, less of resolute firmness than of any other quality needful to give it tone and power. She thought, moreover, that her visiter was a person whose impulses, whether of good or evil, were so perceptible and unconcealed, and whose fearlessness led to so great a degree of candour and simplicity, that she could not be on the whole other than an amiable and estimable woman.

She replied therefore, not only courteously but even warmly, expressed her sense of obligation at the civility which had produced this visit to a stranger, said that she had no doubt they should be very good friends, and remarked with a smile upon their former meeting at the gates of Paris. This led to some mention of Major Wyvil, and Alice, ever remarkable for the strength and coolness of her resolution, spoke of her former lover with an air so entirely calm and unembarrassed, as would have rendered it impossible for any stranger to suspect that a feeling warmer than mere friendship ever had existed, if even that were not more than was warranted by her manner.

Meantime, Chaloner took his leave; and, laughing merrily, and jesting in a wild light-hearted style about all sorts of things, now rattling on with some strange witty nonsense, now uttering deeper thoughts and sentiments more powerful than one would have expected her to entertain, Isabella still remained; and Alice, half amused, half tired, but with a sad and burning heart, was compelled to entertain her, wondering how long this strange interview would continue. At length Madame de Gondi was summoned out of the apartment on busi-

ness of a pressing nature, and then, starting up from her chair, Isabella crossed the room to the sofa, on which Alice sat, exclaiming, "Oh! I am very glad that she has gone away, for now I can tell you what I want. I was afraid she would not have gone at all. You think me, I can see, a strange bold girl, and are, I fancy, half afraid of me; and I don't wonder at it. I never had a mother—that is, within my recollection—and I have been a spoiled child all my life; and have been rambling about always among camps, and garrisons, and battle-fields, and doing just what suited me, till I have grown up to be what I am. But, I assure you, I am not so bad as you think me! my manner is the worst part of me, indeed! and you will find that if I am wild, and free, and fearless, I am true and honest. I would not tell a lie to be the Queen of France! and the truth is, that I have come to see you, because I want to be resolved of something, of which nobody can resolve me but yourself. So I shall go to the point at once.

"This Major Wyvil, whom you know so well, and whom you saved, I understand, from death, by your presence of mind and courage—who

would have thought that so quiet and gentle a little thing as you could be so brave? This Major Wyvil, I say, swears that he loves me very dearly, and, as I love him very well, that is to say a great deal more than I ever loved any thing—more than my beautiful black horse, Rolando, and twenty times as much as my dear Persian greyhound — I think it quite probable that we shall be married some day. Now I cannot tell why it is—but I have taken it into my head that you and he were going to be married once, and that he has used you ill—and me too, if I am right—and I would sooner marry old Monsieur de Grandpré, who is the ugliest man in all France, or what is still worse, remain all my life an old maid, than to take a man on whom another woman had a claim of honour—so I came straight to you to ask you all about it."

It cannot be denied that this speech tried poor Alice very deeply—tried her in many ways. It probed her own deep love-wound to the very quick—it sorely shook the constancy and endurance of her principle, but so deep was the root of that fixed principle, that it resisted the assault, and yielded not a whit to

the fierce passionate tempest that was awakened for a moment in that calm breast. She blushed very deeply, and paused a little while to frame her reply before she uttered it, for in truth she found it no easy matter to answer as she would —her firm decision never herself to countenance him as a lover, her strong and still enduring love for him, and her desire to make him happy in his own way, united to render her willing to promote his union with her rival, so perfectly pure and disinterested was her passion for this unworthy object, while at the same time her native truthfulness made it impossible for her to deceive even by implication. She was, however, fully impressed with the idea that such an union would be well for both, that it would reclaim, or rather fix, the vacillating character of Wyvil, and satisfy the ardent love which, she could readily perceive, existed in the bosom of this high-souled, though wild and erratic, being; and she began to think that really a girl of Isabella's marked and masculine decision was better suited than herself to ensure the happiness of a man, whose greatest fault appeared to be the want of a resolute and energetic will.

She paused, therefore, a moment or two

before she answered, and then said, "I would not reply to your question too suddenly, for I must justify the frank and open confidence which you have placed in me, and for the world I would not deceive you. To be frank, then, we were once engaged, and that engagement might have been binding still, but that I of my own will, annulled it. I cannot, therefore, accuse him of any breach of faith toward me, for he was not willing only, but actually anxious, to make good his promise. I had, however, my own views on the subject, and rejected him."

"Rejected him!" exclaimed Isabella, staring out of her great black eyes in astonishment, not all unmixed with indignation; "rejected Marmaduke Wyvil!"

"I did indeed," Alice replied, with a sad smile; "does that seem so strange to you?"

"It does, it does!" answered the other vehemently; "it does seem strange to me, that any woman should reject him, so brave! so noble! and so handsome! Oh! had you seen him as I have, rushing into the deadly fray, as if he were hurrying to a banquet; heard his clear voice pealing above the din of battle, you

never, never could have done so. Why, he is fit to be the husband of the stateliest queen that wears a crown, or wields a sceptre!"

"I doubt not that you think so," answered Alice; "perhaps I once thought so myself; perhaps I think so even now! but I do not think him fit to be the husband of Alice Selby, or Alice Selby fit to be the wife of him."

"You are playing at enigmas with me; you are making game of me," said Isabella; "I did not look for this from you?"

"Indeed I am not, I would not mislead you intentionally for half the hemisphere; much less would I jest with you on so grave a subject. I say to you simply the truth, when I say that Major Wyvil has never broken any promise to me; for he has never made me one, which he would not have performed, had I been willing. And further I have no claim on him whatsoever, whether in law or honour, and further yet, I should be more glad, than I think I shall ever be, to learn that *you* have become his wife! Upon my word! and that is what I do not, I hope, say lightly—I think that you are suited excellently well for one another, and that his character will take a tone from your decision—

and, once more, upon my honour! I know of no cause why *you* should not wed him—our views of these things, as our characters, are very different."

"He did not then break his word to you?" asked Isabella.

"He did not!" Alice answered, very firmly, "so far from that—the first time, after he plighted me his word, he was exceeding urgent on the subject; and, as I told you even now—the weight of this breach of contract rests upon my head only—now are you satisfied?"

"Not quite," replied Isabella. "No! I am not quite satisfied. Why did you reject him? and when was it? I must know all about it."

"Not from me, dear young lady," Alice spoke with a grave, and somewhat indignant tone. "Not from me!" I have informed you of all that I can reveal honourably. My reasons for rejecting him are between myself, him, and my God. They might have arisen—perhaps they may have—from false views or prejudices; and, therefore, I have no right at all to influence you, by telling them. I hold the confidence of love matters between man and woman to be the holiest and most binding that exists on earth;

and I think that no true girl ever discloses the overture, which she has been forced to reject, even to mother, sister, husband,—unless there be some cause, such as this present, which makes it, not justifiable only, but right for all parties, to declare it. You must excuse me, therefore, if I decline to say any thing further. This only I canadd,—he would have kept his word to me, but I would let him not."

"But he told me," answered Isabella, very quickly, "that he had never known or even thought of you—that was not true?"

"No! it was not; but I presume he was afraid to tell you, that he had ever loved before; lest you should esteem that a reason for discarding him. For many girls are so foolish, Isabella, as not to be satisfied with knowing that a man loves them truly, but they must need insist on being told, that they are the first and only object he has loved at all; which, if he be over eighteen years and not an idiot, or as cold as snow, can hardly be true anywise. I am quite sure that he loves you truly now; and I have no doubt in my mind, that he will prove a very true and loving lord. So, trust me, the best thing you

can do, is just to marry him directly—that is to say, if your family consent."

"Family, indeed!" answered Isabella, "what have my family to do with it? My great grandmother and my tenth cousin are not going to marry the man; but I suppose it is my father that you mean; and I am not at all sure that *he* will consent, for he expects that my husband should be rich, I fancy;—though, what it signifies, when we have such quantities of money, I cannot guess. And Marmaduke, poor fellow, has not a franc beyond his pay."

"Ah! is it so?"—asked Alice—"Well—if it be so, and you should really find any difficulty on that score, I must insist that you let *me* know it—I may—nay I can almost say—I *shall* be able to avert that, if it be the sole objection!"—

"You! you!" exclaimed Isabella, very much astonished—"you able to avert it?—How can that be?—and will you if you can?"—

"I cannot tell you how," said Alice Selby; "but be sure that, if I can, I will—and gladly! gladly—does that satisfy you?"

"Indeed it does, dear lady," replied the

other, rising, as she spoke, to go—"I should be bitterly ungrateful else—and I cannot well tell you how sensible I am of all your goodness, and how sincereful grateful I shall be to you, for ever! I am not very ready at professions—but, as I told you before, I am honest. No! no! dear Alice—may I not call you Alice?—you must let me kiss that pale cheek of yours—we must be friends hereafter—now will I say farewell—excuse me to Madame de Gondi."

CHAPTER VII.

THE afternoon of that day passed away very quietly, no other visiters arrived, and the evening meal was served to Madame de Gondi, Alice, and her old father only, who was far less abstracted than his wont, as indeed he had been ever since his arrival in Paris, observing the occurrences that were going on about him, and appearing at times even to take an interest in them. They had been conversing for some hours, as gaily as it was possible for persons to do, all three of whom had something heavy at the heart, and each one something to conceal or keep back from the other; when suddenly, without the least apparent cause or excitement, Alice was seized with another of those terrible fainting

fits, which had so much alarmed her friends on their occurrence twice before; and remained longer under its influence, and continued weaker and more indisposed after it had passed, than she had done in either of the preceding cases.

Her cousin, as usual, had her removed to her own chamber, and did all that personal kindness and attention could effect to hasten her recovery; but it was very much to her astonishment that, on her return to the saloon, she found the old man walking up and down the room with long and steady steps, holding a billet, which he had written, in his hand, and seeming to expect the presence of a servant, who had probably been summoned.

"My dear Madame de Gondi," said the old scholar, as she entered, "we never can thank you sufficiently for your great kindness; but you can add, even to the vastness of that debt, by being quite frank with me. My sweet child!—my own Alice! Think you not that she is fearfully, dangerously ill?"

"Indeed—indeed! I fear so; and I have thought it right to send even now for old Monsieur Pallu, the best esteemed of all our leeches."

"Ay," replied Selby, gravely, with a half-doubtful shake of his thin locks—"ay! if it be not all too late—if it have not its root deeper. Her mother faded even thus—faded, and fleeted out of sight; like a brief meteor, before one had even time to fear that she was passing. Think you not that her heart—her affections, I would say—have much to do with this? Has she not told you of her love for Major Wyvil—and their troth plighting?"

"She has indeed," answered Henriette, not without many a tear—"she has indeed—and my fears point too truly, even as yours do. You know, I presume, that she has met this gentleman, that he has visited her even here, and that but yesterday she declined as she told me, positively, and for ever, the completion of that contract."

"I did not—no, I did not—" said the old man. —"Are you quite sure?—Declined?—is it possible that she declined? That is exceeding strange!—For I am almost sure that she still loves him."

"Most certainly she does so,"—replied Henriette, "but she will never marry him; and I am afraid that in the conflict between principle

and passion, although the first has prevailed grandly and will maintain its victory, her health, nay her life itself, endangered"—and is without any further hesitancy, she told him every thing that had occurred since their arrival in Paris—what had taken place, in the garden of the Tuileries—what, at the ball in the palace—and what, in the final interview between Alice and Marmaduke, so far at least as she had informed her.

"Oh! villain — villain!" — exclaimed the old man, bitterly—"weak, vacillating knave, and villain!—and fool yet more than either!—Had she but had a brother, and this had never happened, or had been bitterly avenged!—But I—I—God be gracious to me! I have not wisdom to deal with the veriest fool, in worldly craft—nor strength to be avenged upon a froward child!"—and with the words he flung himself into a chair, and burst into an agony of tears so terribly convulsive, sobbing and choking so with the effects of anguish and rage blended, and that in their most appalling crisis, that Henriette actually dreaded for the endurance of his reason, if not of his life, yet dared not call a witness to break upon the sacred and most solemn privacy of that paternal passion.

As suddenly, however, as it had broken out, the transport of his grief subsided. "Pardon me," he said, slowly, and even calmly; "you will pardon me—she is my own, my only one—the very image of her who was once the best of women, and now is an everliving spirit of God's kingdom—my only hope, support, and treasure!—and He has slain her—speak not of consolation! The young may be consoled, but not the old, who have grown old in sorrow; it is not however for us to judge, but to submit to His judgments. We will not trouble her—she has decided wisely now, although 'she loved not wisely, but too well!' Had she forgiven and accepted him to be her lord, it is too likely that the vile earthy temper of his soul would have clogged and weighed down to earth the spiritual essence of her pure and heaven-soaring mind. He, who knows all things, hath so ordered this, that it must be the better, although to us blind worms it seem the worse conclusion. We will name this no more, but wait, and watch, and pray—with this one comfort, 'that whom He chasteneth he loveth!'"

He left the room, as he ceased speaking, but, ere he retired to his own lonely chamber, he

entered the still and sad apartment, where, all unconscious of her cares and sorrows, his lovely child lay sleeping, as calm, as motionless, and only not as cold, as though she had already passed the portals of the tomb. He stood there long, and gazed in silence, not a tear softened the hot anguish of his burning eyeballs—not a sigh came from his pale lips—he gazed till he was satisfied that there was no hope left to him, turned on his heel, and passed with a step, very slow but firm, to his own bedchamber. There was no more abstraction, no more vacillation, no more weakness, in the old scholar's eye or manner. Before he laid him down to sleep, he called the faithful servant who had followed him from Woolverton, the oldest and the most attached of his attendants, gave him the letter he had written, telling him to see to it the first thing to-morrow, that he whom it concerned should have it early. "He will come hither shortly afterwards," he added, "wait for him there, and bring him to me hither, as quickly as may be. I wish that as few as possible of this household should know of it." The man read the superscription with much care, bowed, and retired; and Selby, after kneeling long in fervent and

heartfelt communion with Him from whom alone strength cometh, stretched himself on his bed, and, sad although he was, and stricken, slept with the undisturbed repose that springs from a sound conscience.

It had not long been daylight on the following morning, before a startling and stubbornly-sustained knocking awoke the ancient porters of the house, wherein were Marmaduke's apartments; and, though the crusty and ill-tempered veteran declared that Major Wyvil had scarcely been a bed an hour, and could not be seen before noon by any one, the messenger, a hale, broad-shouldered, rosy-cheeked Englishman, of some forty years, persisted with so much of the dogged pertinacity of his Saxon race, that he made his way perforce to Wyvil's antechamber, where he raised such a din, that Marmaduke was aroused thoroughly, and, calling sharply to his valet, inquired "What in the fiend's name means that racket?"

"It's a billet, sir; only a trifling billet," answered the fellow, "which this rude knave, in a blue jerkin, insists upon it, he must give into your own hands!"

"Let him do so, then, Clement," replied

Wyvil; "if it be only to get rid of his insolent din. Your master, fellow," he went on as the servant came in, and delivered the note, "should know more of gentle courtesy than to disturb people, in the night, thus."

"My master," answered the hardy yeoman, nothing abashed, "knew more of gentle courtesy, forty years before thou wert in the cradle, than thou and all thy kindred—and that thou wilt know, I warrant me, when thou hast read his letter."

And it would seem, indeed, that there was in that brief epistle some spell of strange puissance, for, though he tore the paper open with an impatient gesture, and with an heightened colour, and a flashing eye, his whole air altered as he read the few words which it contained; and he appeared crest-fallen and abashed when he again spoke.

"Ha! it is well!" he said, though with a very visible effort to maintain his composure. "Go, tell thy master, I will be with him presently—forthwith! Clement, my dressing robe—so, hurry, hurry! death to thy soul! man, dost not see I am in haste!"

And within far less time than the valet had

ever seen his master devote to the arrangement of his love-locks only, he was completely dressed, and went forth unattended, leaving his household in strange wonder and excitement, to which the perusal of the mysterious billet—for, in his haste, he left it on the coverlid—brought no alleviation, for it contained but these words:

" Marmaduke Wyvil,

" I charge thee come to me, on the very instant.

" Thine, MARK SELBY."

A short walk through the quiet streets, which lay out-stretched, all silent and deserted, in the gray morning twilight, with nothing moving over their noiseless pavements but some poor houseless dog searching the kennels for a thrice gnawed bone; or rarer still, some early artisan hastening to his daily toil, he reached the *porte-cochere* of the Hôtel de Gondi; and, though anxiety, and something that was like a fiery hope, and much that was like harrowing terror, were busy at his heart, it was still almost a relief to him to feel that he was soon to be plunged into excitement, even of a

painful nature; so terribly reproachful had the calm coolness of the pure morning air, and the unusual solitude of the slumbering city seemed to his guilty and perturbed imagination.

Of all the numerous and gaily dressed attendants who were wont to fill the courtyard of that lordly mansion no one was moving, even in the porter's lodge, with the exception of the English servant, who had summoned him; and he stood leaning carelessly against the wicket, which alone was open, whistling the burden of some old border-ballad with a true air of listless independence. As Marmaduke drew near, however, he made way for him with a sort of surly civility, touching his bonnet, but it was evident that he looked with no good will upon the courtly gallant; and very probably he had something more than a vague suspicion that he was in some sort connected with the illness of his beloved mistress. He led the young cavalier immediately into the house, though not by the grand entrance, and up a dark and narrow staircase, and so by several intricate corridors and passages into a little antechamber; and, as he paused there, the sound of a regular heavy foot-

step fell on the ear of Wyvil, and then the deep groan of a man, apparently in acute pain, or deep affliction; the next instant the servant knocked gently at a door, and a voice, but too well remembered, cried, "Is it he? Let him enter!" and as he walked with a faltering step and a fearful eye into the presence of Mark Selby, the old man said, "it is well, Charles; now begone and wait for him at the head of the staircase beyond earshot. Let no one come to us unless I ring my bell, or call to you. Be seated, Major Wyvil; it is some time since we have met."

"It is indeed," said Wyvil, exceedingly confused, and not, in the least, knowing how to meet the old man.

"It is indeed," he repeated with a bitter sneer; his voice, though feeble, not trembling in the least, and his gray eye piercing the shrinking wretch, as the falcon's overpowers the craven gaze of all meaner fowls—"It is indeed some time, and I suppose it might have been full longer—What does this mean, sir?—what does this mean, I say?—What were you thinking of, when you dared do this thing?"

"I know not what *you* mean, Master Selby," replied Marmaduke, rallying all his courage—"I know not any thing that I have done,—"

"Nor left undone?" the old man answered, in a tone so piercing yet so stern, that he dared not reply for a moment or two; till, *feeling* that dread gaze still fixed upon him—for his own eyes were downcast, and no more could brook the glance of the injured father, than could the carrion vulture face the meridian sun—he forced himself to say, "Nor left undone, sir, for I would fain have fulfilled my pledge and married your fair daughter, whom I love beyond every woman upon earth, but she rejected me—rejected me, as doubtless you well know, with bitter scorn and contumely—and that is, what may not be borne by any man of honour!"

"And have you, have you really the daring to call yourself a man of honour? Look you, I know you, poor, vain, vacillating fool, I know you! Answer me not, I say, answer me not; sit there while I rehearse to you your *honourable* exploits. Some thirteen months ago, there lived in Worcestershire a very happy, aged man, exceeding happy, for he was blest with as beautiful, and innocent, and sweet, and good child, as ever

lived on earth, or died and went to heaven!" The old man was now thoroughly aroused, and his cheek, thin as it was and withered, was kindled with a glow of noble indignation, and his voice, though it quivered with excitement, seemed to his panic-stricken auditor to thrill trumpetlike to his heart's core. "There were *you* harboured; there at your utmost need, were you preserved by that girl's more than heroic constancy and courage, and by that old man's untimely pity and fool confidence! Liar and traitor! you won her innocent heart, plighted false vows, escaped, forgot, forswore her!"

"Not so! not so! By Heaven and Him that made it! it is not so! I would have claimed her hand, would claim it now, out of ten thousand, as I would prize her heart."

"Liar again! her heart which thou hast broken! her hand which thou didst set aside as a thing lighter than thistledown and far less worthless! Thou fool—thou fool! oh! trivial, wretched, and most miserable fool! all this thou hast done in the pride of thine earthly wisdom; her didst thou win in the mere idleness of a frivolous and fitful fancy; didst win such an angel as had been far too high a boon for

the best man that ever trod the soil of this bad world, wast fool enough to forget, liar enough to forswear—and then traitor, and knave, and fool enough—all three in one! to fancy you could win her back to look upon a thing so vile and vicious!"—

"Have you done yet?" exclaimed Wyvil, whose spirit, naturally high and fiery, was at length kindled, and aroused beyond all its self-control by the reproaches which the old man poured so vehemently and so deservedly upon his head—"Have you done, yet? for I will bear no further!"—

"Done yet!" cried Selby, even more fiercely than before—"Not well begun! Dog! I will blazon out your villany to the broad world! your crime shall not succeed! your baseness shall not screen you! Two victims you have slain already—the third I will rescue from your clutches—Listen—now listen—a short life shall you drag out here! a short life and a wretched! scorned, and despised of all men! abandoned by your God! for when your soul shall turn towards him, the spirit of my Alice—my Alice, whom you have so foully murdered—shall stand between you, and screen the light of his for-

giveness—and shut you out from mercy—condemned by your own conscience—the basest and the blackest thing that crawls !—and, when you die, the very fiends shall cast you out from among them, too vile and villanous for their companionship. Now then ! begone ! for the first time you have heard, this morning—what henceforth you shall hear for ever—begone, I say, villain and slave, make me rid of the contamination of your presence !"

" It is well for you," exclaimed Wyvil, as savagely as the sense of guilt detected, and despair and frenzy can drive a man to exclaim even against his conscience. " It is well for you that you are an old man, and *her* father, else," and he clinched his fist and shook it in the air, as he turned to leave the room.

" Ho ! dog," shouted the old man, " Ho ! dog ! dost thou dare threaten ? Then, old man as I am, will I put thee to shame. Ha ! ha ! the old man will strike thee ! Without there, Gregory, Charles, Martin, come all ! come all ! I say, and see me strike him," and he rushed fiercely forward, as if to clutch him. But there was still enough of grace and manhood left in Wyvil, that he awaited not the onslaught of the aged mourner

but darted quickly through the door, closed it behind him, and rushing down the passage, met the man Charles, who fancying that he was called only to show him forth, did so in scorn and silence.

As soon, however, as he had seen Wyvil out of the gates, and had satisfied himself that no one of the household had observed him, he hurried back to his master's room ; for he had heard his voice raised so far above its natural pitch, and had caught words of passion so unusual, that he almost feared some catastrophe. He reached the door, and as he was about to knock for admission, his worst apprehensions were confirmed by the appearance of a thin narrow stream of some dark fluid trickling slowly over the sill, and dabbling the rich carpet ; without a moment's pause he rushed in, half beside himself with terror ; under his feet there was a pool—a veritable pool of blood—and in a large arm chair, half seated and half lying on the table, as if he had fallen, and with an effort struggled up again, was the good gentle scholar, his thin white hair splashed with the gory witness, and his pale lips crimsoned by the tide which, in that ecstasy of

anger had flowed from his vitals. At first, the servant believed that he was already dead ; but, as he raised him gently to an erect position, he perceived that the rush of blood had for the most part ceased, and that, though very weak and faint, he was still both alive and sensible ; for, as he met his eye, a faint smile played over his wan face, and he seemed about to speak.

"Hush! hush! my master, my dear honoured master ; hush thee, while I call help, and all shall yet be well."

"No ! Charles," the dying man said, very feebly, and at each word a little blood again oozed from the corners of his mouth. "No ! do not go ! It is too late ! I shall be dead—directly—and I have much—much that I would say !"

"Curse on him ! curse on him !" exclaimed the servant. "He hath done this—the villain ! and I not near to aid thee, oh ! my master !"

"No! you are wrong, no, Charles," Selby gasped forth, even more faintly than before. "Not he! not he! my own rash—wicked passion!—Remember this—promise me that you

speak no word of his being here to any one but General Henry—and tell him what I say. Promise, Charles—promise me—you did not use to disobey."

"And will not now, I promise thee," cried the man, as distinctly as he could in the intervals of his tears. A gleam of satisfaction lightened across the face of his dying master. "Let Alice—never—know it. Remember—O Lord, receive my spirit!" His speech came now in gasps, and the blood gushed out constantly, so as almost to choke him. "Tell—tell"—he hiccoughed with a mighty effort—"tell her that—I died—blessing her!" The two last words he articulated clearly, as though he no longer felt either pain or weakness; and with them he rose to his feet, stretched his arms upward, and, as if answering some summons heard by his ears alone, "I come!" he cried, and fell gently backward on the breast of his faithful follower—the good man had gone to his account.

CHAPTER VIII.

THOSE were the days when servants waited on their masters not with lip-loyalty alone, but with heart service; when the dependant was not looked upon as a mere hireling, to be considered only with reference to the work done and the wages paid; nor the employer regarded solely as the dispenser of food and raiment, to be cheated as much, and obeyed as little as practicable; which, I fear, will be found the case too often, despite the much vaunted superiority and intelligence of these modern times.

Charles, who had lived in the household of Mark Selby from his boyhood, did not therefore immediately rush down to tell every member of the family, from the maître d'hôtel and

housekeeper down to the marmiton and scullery-maid, how Major Wyvil had slain old master Selby; but, taking into consideration the extremely delicate state of Alice, and her entirely unprotected situation, having first laid the body decently on a couch, and covered it with the long sad-coloured cloak which the good gentleman had worn while living, he went down stairs and called up his fellow-servant, who, like himself, had been born at Woolverton, and never had known any other master. Desiring him to remain with the body and suffer nobody to enter, lest Mistress Alice should learn what had passed too soon, he set off instantly to Henry Chaloner's lodging in the Rue Royale, and telling him all that had occurred, precisely as it *had* occurred, alike without exaggeration or diminution of the truth, entreated him to come up forthwith to the Hôtel de Gondi.

Shocked as he was, and pained by this intelligence, there needed no entreaty to hurry Chaloner's proceedings; he was already up and dressed, when the man was admitted to his presence, haggard and pale and panic-stricken; for the excitement, which had nerved him to his duty in the first instance, had wholly passed

away; and after hearing his sad tale, and asking him a few pertinent questions, he put on his cloak and high-crowned hat, and, bidding two or three of his own most trusty men to buckle on their swords and follow him, took his way to the scene of the terrible catastrophe.

"You have done very well, Charles," he said, "exceeding well; had you not strictly obeyed what my poor cousin told you, much evil would have come of it. You are quite sure that you have not mentioned it to any one, that Major Wyvil was in your master's room this morning."

"I promised my master that I would not, General Henry," said the man, with the tears streaming down his face, "promised him just before he went to heaven, and do you think that I would break my word to him, and he looking down, and hearing me?"

"Indeed, Charles, I do you not so much wrong. I only feared that, in the haste and terror of the moment, you might have let it out, incautiously, to some of your fellow-servants."

"No! General Henry, no! I did nothing in haste, and I have seen no one this morning, but Anthony, who is now with the body, and he knows nothing of it."

"And you are certain no one saw him enter?"

"No one at all, nor go out either, general."

"So far, at least, is well! Then, mark me, Charles, poor Master Selby was quite right, it would go near to kill Mistress Alice did she know ever what hand Major Wyvil had to do in your master's death. Therefore, my good fellow, hold steadily to your story; tell the truth only, add nothing; but quietly omit all mention of the cavalier. Say you called Master Selby at his usual hour, saw him arise and begin to dress himself, left him to do some other work, and, upon your return found him as you have told me. Now do you understand me perfectly?"

"Perfectly, general," the man answered, "and you may trust me, I will do as you desire."

They had by this time reached the house, and all the servants of the establishment being at length on foot, Chaloner sent a message to Madame de Gondi, saying that he would wish to speak with her, as soon as might be quite convenient; and then, bidding his servants wait for him in the great hall, took his way quietly and sadly to the chamber of his departed kinsman. The scene is bitter and heart chilling at all times, and under circumstances the most favour-

able, when we behold the dwelling-room of a dead friend, tenanted only by the cold and senseless clay of him who but a little while ago rendered it gay and lightsome by his living presence—the chair whereon he sat, the pen with which he wrote, yet standing in the ink as he perhaps had left it, the favourite book with its leaf turned down at the favourite passage—the garments, the very gloves perhaps, which he so lately wore, retaining still the mould of the recent hand that never more may fill them!—all these, and fifty other little accessories, too trivial to be noted or remembered, contribute to make up at all times a dark and painful picture—but it was a far sadder and more terrible array of circumstances, that met the eye of Chaloner—all these were there—the book—the very Epictetus, treating of restraint and patience under wrong, which he had probably been reading to school his spirit for that fatal meeting, lay on the board, with all the other well-known volumes that employed the good scholar's studious leisure—but there among his books, and on the tapestried wall, and on the Persian carpet, glared the dark gouts of life-blood, while outstretched pale and livid on the couch, with the stout serving man hold-

ing the cold stiff hand and weeping over it with all but woman's fondness, lay all the mortal part of the wise and gentle student.

"This is a sad sight, my friends," said Chaloner, with difficulty restraining his own tears. "He was a good man; we will trust he is now with the blessed. Now leave me, honest friends, I would be here alone with him for the last time—do not go down, but wait beside the door till I come forth to you."

His words were instantly obeyed, and then, kneeling beside the body, "Thou art gone from us!" he exclaimed—"my more than friend, my father—thou art gone from us—happy to go at this time"—and, burying his head in the vestments of his dead kinsman, he prayed long and fervently; and when he arose, although his air was sorrowful and chastened, it was composed and firm—"Heaven, give me strength," he said, "to go through with this painful duty!" And, with the words, he left the chamber; and, telling the two men to watch, and alter nothing in the position of the furniture, or of the body, until the police-judge should be called, with the physicians to survey it, he went to break the heavy tidings to

Madame de Gondi, and to concert with her the means of disclosing them to Alice.

The former he found almost prepared for what he had to tell her; for she declared to him, while mentioning the conversation that had passed between them the last evening, that there had been so strange an alteration in the whole manner, tone, and appearance of Mark Selby, as almost to satisfy her that his mortal term was rapidly approaching; and it was with a feeling which almost resembled pleasure, that he heard her express her conviction that Alice, after the first sudden grief, would bear the blow with resignation, and even look on it as a release for her dear father from worse, and far more grievous suffering. "It was but last night," she said to me, "speaking of her own coming dissolution, which she foresees, as certainly as we do, that she should go hence with one regret alone—to leave the old man her survivor. So, I am sure, good friend, that she will not be grieved by this, beyond her power to bear. Now, general," she added, "I will write forthwith to my kind friend, the Bishop de Lisieux, and pray him see his majesty, and procure the remission of the odious *droits d'au-*

baine, by which, you know all personal properties of any foreigner, who dies here, become forfeit to the crown. Do you send for the Judge of the *quartier* and Monsieur Pallu, the great surgeon, and let us have the investigation over, before she knows aught of it. Remember, she has no suspicion that her father knows any thing of what has passed in Paris.—It will be better far to leave her in that ignorance, think you not so?"

"Oh! surely"—replied Chaloner—"She must not—for the world!—know that he died in the agony of grief and passion—nor that her recreant lover had any hand in it.—I have already written to England to resign my public duties, and when the funeral is over, I will persuade her to return home to Woolverton—new scenes may give a new tone to her mind, and she may yet recover."—

"Never!"—said Henriette—"never!"—Her end is nearer than we think—she never will see England; and *she* knows it."

"Think you so"—he said—"indeed, think you so?—oh! this is very terrible—God's judgments of a truth are all inscrutable—how else,

should this one villain work all this agony, and ruin, and go unwhipped of justice?"

Nothing more was said at that time, both parties hastening away to perform their sad duties, and for awhile the necessity of occupation and exertion overpowered the keenness of their present grief. Before noon, however, all was arranged—the investigation had been held, and nothing material or suspicious having been elicited from the servants, it was decided by the Judge that he had died, as we should now say, "by the visitation of God;" and, accordingly, the permission for the funeral was issued in due form. The king returned a gracious message, remitting instantly the forfeiture, accompanied by kind inquiries—the scene of death was cleansed of its fearful attributes, the corpse laid out and robed in the vesture of the grave, the chamber darkened from without, and an old English clergyman—many Episcopalian dignitaries having been forced to fly the presbyterian persecutions of their own land—summoned to do the last sad offices of his religion, to render the mortal part of his respected countryman, "ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

The day was far advanced, however, before Madame de Gondi again met Chaloner, and when she did so, it was to request his presence in the sick room of Alice. "She bore it, as I told you,—I believed she would,—most christianly, most nobly: there was a burst of acute grief at the first, but soon she became quite calm and contented. 'I shall be with him,' she said, very soon. I am happy that it is so; he would have pined, and been very wretched, had I gone before him. We shall soon meet—I feel it, yea! with a humble confidence I know it—in blessed habitations, never again to sorrow, or be severed.' She wishes now exceedingly to see the body, and to confer with you touching the funeral. There is, you know, some difficulty: our people, our *canaille* I mean, of this good city, are by no means too tolerant; and I fear, if we should seek to bury him with pomp, there might be rioting and insults."

"Oh, that is easily arranged," said Chaloner. "Nothing more easily; good Doctor Granville will perform the rites here privately, with none to witness them, except ourselves and *his* servants. The coffin—I have ordered one of lead, for he will be removed to England shortly—

can be conveyed in your carriage to your private vault at midnight. Can that not be managed ?"

"Oh, yes," she replied ; "I will give orders for it now. But would you let her see the body ?"

"Assuredly," said Chaloner, "Why not, I pray you ? she would not ever be contented if she did not—if you will, take me to her chamber, I will support her thither. It is but a step !"

"Oh ! she is strong enough to walk; I only feared its effect on her mind."

"You do not know her mind, dear lady, as I do," said Henry. "No hero has a firmer or a higher ! Come ! let us go to her."

Alice was seated in a large easy chair, when they went in to see her, dressed in a close gown of white muslin which scarcely showed more delicately pure than her transparent skin, with the redundant tresses of her beautiful brown hair concealed by a plain cap of lawn—upon a little table at her elbow there lay a flask of some stimulating perfume and an open Bible; and near to these stood a glass pitcher full of water, with a Venetian goblet. She had been weeping—as could be readily perceived, for her eye-

lids were inflamed and slightly swollen, and all her features even to the lips were as pale, as living flesh can be, but perfectly resigned and calm and gentle.

She stood up, as they entered, and put out her hand to Chaloner, who raised it quietly to his lips, and she could feel as his mouth pressed it, a large warm tear drop full upon its tender surface. For a moment, she was quite overcome, and sinking back into her chair, covered her face with her handkerchief, but in less time than could have been expected, she removed it from her features, and spoke in her natural voice.

"Oh! Henry—this is very sad—this is very sad and terrible. That he should have gone hence, whose whole life has been nothing but one act of kindness and attention to the wants of others, with no one to allay his sufferings—no one to hold his dying head—to listen to his last words." And she again burst into tears, even at the images she had herself conjured up.

Chaloner waited till the paroxysm was over, and then said, "It is very sad, Alice—quite sad enough, without our conjuring up additions to make it sadder and more terrible. You may be sure he suffered little or nothing of mere

pain ; for he was quite well but a little time before, and all was over in ten minutes. Besides, he had some one to hold his head, and mark his dying words, and save them for his fond survivors. For although you or I were not there, as would doubtless have been sweetest to him, his faithful servant, Charles, was with him, and tells us of so Christian and so calm a parting, as few, the best of men, may hope for. His last thought, except one, was of you; his last message, that he died blessing you; and then it seemed to Charles that he received, or fancied he received, some heavenly summons from on high; for starting to his feet, with eyes, and arms, and hopes all heavenward, he cried aloud, 'I come!' And I think that, without presumption or impiety, we may believe him even now to be with Him, who called him from this scene of trial and of sorrow. There was the sweetest and most placid smile I ever witnessed upon human lips, on that benevolent pale face. Such smiles mask not the faces of the dead who die not just and happy."

She listened calmly, and with profound attention, while he spoke, and seemed to muse deeply after he had finished ; but she still wept,

though there was nothing violent or passionate in the character of her grief, and Chaloner again said, "I do not tell you not to weep, Alice, for that would be unnatural, and I should therefore be sorry that it were the case; but I do tell you not to mourn as one who has no consolation. For you must recollect that your dear father had already long passed the ordinary term of human life, that he retained all his faculties, all his enjoyments to the last, and that, had he lived much longer, he must, in the course of events, have been subject soon to those sad ailments and afflictions which are peculiar to extreme old age. There is, therefore, perhaps, as much cause to rejoice, as to mourn for him, who has only exchanged doubt for certainty, mortality for never-ending bliss."

"I know it, Henry, I know it," she replied. "Sorrow is selfish ever; perhaps more selfish than joy even; and, though I know that by his easy and not untimely death he has escaped not only those things which you have enumerated, but much acute and poignant sorrow that must have ere long broken on him, and of which he passed away in happy ignorance, still it is hard, very hard and bitter to part from one who has so loved

and cherished us, from our birth upward, on whose face we have never seen a frown, from whose dear voice we have never heard a tone that was not all benignity and kindness." And with the words her eyes again overflowed, and she continued for some little time incapable of speaking, while Henry and her kind hostess kept silence in regard and reverence for her feelings. "I am better—I shall be better now," she said, after a while, as if relieved by her tears, "and firmer. Come with me, Henry, I would look upon him, would take leave of him here; soon, I trust—soon again to meet him where there be no more partings."

"You are strong enough, Alice?" he said, in a tone of inquiry. "If so, I am quite ready to attend you; but nerve yourself, dear girl, for it is, as you say, a sad and painful sight."

"No, Henry," she made answer, "the sight of a dear father can in no case be painful. Let us go!"

Chaloner gave her his arm immediately, and conducted her to the little study, where the event had taken place, and where the body lay clothed in the white habiliments of the tomb, the face covered with a linen napkin—the two serv-

ing men who had followed him from his distant home, watching in tears beside the dead ; they rose up gently as their young mistress entered, and stole with noiseless steps out of the room, feeling, with a delicacy rare to their rude though honest natures, that grief such as Alice's should have its vent in solitude. She entered with a step so steady, and a mien so composed and tranquil, that Chaloner gazed on her in amazement; one little shudder shook her slight figure for a moment as her eye fell upon the motionless and rigid outlines of that dear form, but she made no pause, nor did the transient shiver again move her; but she walked straight forward to the couch whereon he lay, and there stood still, gazing upon him with a tearless eye, but with the shadows of many memories fleeting across her eloquent features, like the gray tints projected from autumnal clouds driving across a sunny landscape.

Chaloner stood beside her in deep silence, not all unmixed with awe, for there was something almost terrible in the appearance of the fair, pale girl, so slight, so frail, so spiritual, in her evanescent beauty, so still and passionless, that she seemed scarcely more alive than that

on which her eyes were fixed immoveably, until she made a gesture as if she would have the face uncovered; when he stretched forth his hand and removed the napkin from the face of the dead.

It was, indeed, as he had said, perfectly calm and placid, and withal, it possessed an air of bland and benignant majesty which gave an air of almost supernatural beauty to the white lips and thin aquiline features; there was a sweet smile still lingering round the mouth, and it indeed seemed impossible that any thing of pain or passion should have disturbed the last moments of one whose last expression was so lovely—and this was probably the case; that in the little space which supervened between the gust of wrath that proved too violent for the fragile body, and the actual dissolution, the permanent and real character of the man had overcome the temporary conflict, and that he had indeed died happy.

"Yes," said Alice, after she had gazed upon him quietly, till her eyes were so dimmed by the moisture which rolled into them constantly, that she could no more see the features—"yes, it is beautiful, almost divine. Dear, dearest

father, happy indeed, and blameless was thy life, if any thing of mortal mould can be called blameless; and, God be praised for it! thy death was happy! farewell—farewell—and if, as I believe, thy spirit looks down from above on her whom thou so truly and so tenderly didst love, and hears the words I utter, pardon, oh! pardon me the many cares and troubles I have given thee! farewell—farewell!" and she stooped over him and pressed her warm lips to the clay-cold brow; "farewell—my moan is made—my tears shall no more flow; I shall go to thee, my father, and that right soon, but thou shalt not return to me." And, with the words, she took the napkin from the hand of Chaloner, and fixing one more long and wistful look on the unconscious lineaments, one more last kiss upon the icy brow, she spread it gently over him, turned away suddenly, as if she could not trust herself to look again, took Henry's arm, and glided from the darkened chamber. Beyond the threshold of the door she passed the servants who had been watching, and raising her eyes to their faces she said with a melancholy smile "I thank you, very truly, my good friends; and God, who forgets no good or grateful deed, will

certainly reward you, for that you have not forgotten him who was kind to us all, and a father, while he was yet here. Go in and watch with him—this last sad duty, will, ere long, be over."

That very evening all was over! that very evening, in the same small room where he had passed the most part of his days, since he had lived in Paris—where he had met his end—his body was consigned to its last tabernacle, the cold coffin; and there,—with none of those about him, whom, through a long and innocent life his presence had filled ever with a sentiment of joy, none indeed who had known him truly, save Chaloner and Alice, and the servants, who had followed him across the sea, although Madame de Gondi and all her household were assembled,—the meek old clergyman performed the exquisite and touching service appointed by the Church of England; and thence, at the dead of night, was he conveyed by Henry only, with the sacristan and the two English servitors, to the vault where he was to rest until the time should come when he might be removed to his native land, and gathered to the long home of his fathers.

CHAPTER IX.

SEVERAL days elapsed after the funeral of her father, and Alice gradually, as it appeared to those about her, regained not only cheerfulness, but health. Her step was firmer, her eye less wildly brilliant, and her complexion more natural in its hues, and showing less of that hectic flush, which tells of latent fever; so much, indeed, did she seem to amend, that a delusive hope had already begun to grow up in the bosoms of Madame de Gondi, and even, though to a less extent, of Henry Chaloner; yet, when they hinted this to her, and spoke to her of pleasant projects for the winter, and of her return to Woolverton with the early spring, she would only shake her head and smile—but,

since the death of her father, it was remarkable that the smile had lost its grave if not melancholy character, and that, although she was never joyous or even gay, nothing could be more remote from hopeless grief, or permanent yet uncomplaining sorrow, than was the air of that lovely girl. She appeared, indeed, though she avoided to speak on the subject, to be looking forward to her approaching dissolution with a quiet confidence, and to regard it not as a thing to be deplored, and if possible averted, but rather as a joyous consummation. To the visits of the worthy surgeon she acceded readily; and to all his remedial measures she consented willingly; but one day when Chaloner, deceived by one of those singular turns which characterise the terrible malady that was consuming her, expressed his conviction that she was recovering.

"Do not," she said, "deceive yourself, truest and best of friends. I never shall recover—nor indeed do I wish it. I take all proper remedies, I submit to the precautions of the leech, because I know it is my duty to await—not hasten—His appointed time. But these matters do not deceive me—let them not mislead you, Henry;

moreover, as I tell you, it is my earnest prayer evening and morning, unto HIM, that when his time shall come he will permit me to depart in peace, and join those that await me. Pray therefore, Henry, if you pray for me at all, not that he give me life, but death, which, unto them who die in the Lord, is a boon far more blessed!"

After this conversation, no allusions more were made to the subject; Chaloner, admitted now as an *habitué* of the family, passed much of his time at the Hôtel de Gondi, and things were falling gradually into their old routine, except that as yet no strangers were admitted to the house of mourning; when late one evening while Henry was reading aloud a tragedy of Corneille's to the ladies, a servant entered with a small note, upon a silver salver, addressed in a feminine hand to Mistress Alice Selby. She opened it without emotion, observing, as she did so, "I knew not that I had a correspondent in this great city," but as she read it, she was a little agitated, and blushed deeply—then, asking for the pens and standish, she wrote a few lines in reply, sealed them up carefully and handed the paper to the man, with instructions to give

it to the messenger who had brought the letter. This done she rose from her seat, and twisting up the note she had received, lighted it at the candle, and then threw it among the hot wood ashes on the hearth.

"It was a note," she said, as if imagining that some explanation might be expected, "from Isabella Oswald, asking permission to come and see me soon."

"And what did you say in reply?" asked Henriette.

"I told her to come as early as she could to-morrow; what little I saw of her the other day, pleased me, I confess, very much—and that against my preconceived opinion—for though she is, beyond doubt, extremely handsome, there is something not altogether pleasing in the style of her beauty; and her manners are at first extremely rough and masculine. But she has clearly a fine heart, and a noble spirit—and is as true and upright as the heart of truth!"

"I have heard also," said Chaloner, in reply, "and that, too, from one who knows her very well, the excellent old Marquis de St. Eloy, that she is a most noble girl, the very soul of honour. His expression, touching her, was that

'she would not say a thing that she did not know to be true, or do a thing that she did not feel to be right, to win a world to her feet; but what she considered true, and judged right, that she would say, and would do, in despite of the whole world!'"

"It is a fine character, truly," said Madame de Gondi, "though not a woman's character; at least, not what I think a woman's should be."

"Not, perhaps, altogether," replied Henry. "Yet is the distinction barely the shadow of a shade; the first part of his sentence is, of course, pure praise; no man, or woman either, ought to say or do any thing which they believe false or evil, to win an universe; and every woman ought to *do*, no less than every man, what she *knows* right, against a world's opinion. As to the saying all that she knows true, that is a different thing, for many things may be very true, and yet exceedingly untimely; and most untimely things, even untimely truths, do evil more than good. Still, perhaps, Mistress Oswald's fault is rather in the manner than the matter; and, as Madame de Gondi says, it is a very fine and noble character. I have heard some exceedingly great traits and actions of her doing."

"Pray tell me, I should like much to hear them," exclaimed Alice. And, without any hesitation, Chaloner proceeded to relate the adventure of Isabella near Villeneuve St. George, and her spirited conduct in interposing between Marmaduke and the punishment he had incurred in her behalf; and several other anecdotes displaying the same fearless generosity, and disregard of consequences, in the prosecution of whatever she believed it right for her to carry out. Thus the night passed till they retired; and the next morning, when Henriette descended to the breakfast-room, she was informed that Mademoiselle Oswald had been engaged in private with Mistress Alice for nearly two hours' space, and had not yet departed. Almost at the same instant, the two beautiful girls entered, and at once Madame de Gondi perceived a peculiar air of flashing joy and triumph in the dark fiery eye and proud features of Isabella, contrasted by a calm glow of happy satisfaction, that seemed to warm up the tranquil face of Alice into more animation than it was generally seen to wear. Isabella tarried at her request to partake the sociability of the first, and perhaps most thoroughly

social, meal of the day, and every thing passed very pleasantly, 'till Henry entered, soon after which, with an excuse for having made so long a stay, the fair visiter withdrew.

"Now, cousin Henry," said Alice, before the other could have reached the hall-door, "I want to have some talk with you on matters of grave business—about estates, and rent-rolls, and life-tenures, and I know not what—and so, as these things are not very entertaining to most people, we will leave our dear Henriette for a while, and go to settle these matters in the library."

The library was a large and somewhat gloomy room, the last of the suite of great apartments, opening by a side door into the little chamber, which had been occupied by her father, and it so happened, that, except the servants, who had been especially directed since the arrival of Mark Selby to alter the arrangement of nothing in the library, no person had entered it since his death. As they went in, therefore, the first thing that met their eyes was a pair of library steps, standing against one of the tall bookcases, with a large folio

volume lying open on the topmost ledge, where it had been unquestionably left by the old scholar; and as if to render this fact even more certain, one of his gloves had dropped upon the floor, and still remained where it had fallen, probably on the very morning of his decease.

"Alas! alas! my father," exclaimed Alice as she saw it; and darting forward she caught it up and pressed it to her lips, and bathed it with her tears, and remained for some time in great and speechless agitation. By degrees, she resumed, however, her self-composure, and sitting down by the great velvet-covered table, "This is no time," she said, "for weakness, and I have much to say to you, and to do, cousin Henry; and I require your assistance and advice.—Therefore, without apology, I shall go to the point at once. I am now, if I understand it rightly, since the event that we so much deplore—" and her voice faltered as she spoke,— "Sole and last heiress of Woolverton Manor, Low Barnsley, and Thorpe Regis—Oakdale and Thorney-burn falling to you as last heir male. Pray interrupt me, if I am wrong."

"No," he said, "you are perfectly right, Alice,

all these are yours in your own right, and at your own sole disposal—you being last heir-in-tail of the three manors you first mentioned."

"And can I, by will, give the reversion of these three to any one I choose, Henry?"

"Surely you can, and could even if you had children."

"And if I were to die without making any will?"

"Then, Alice—but may God long avert the day!—would they revert to me as next of kin, and heir-at-law."

"I thought so—I thought so!" she replied, "then so far there is no will needed. Now tell me, what are each of these three manors worth in annual rent, you used I know to assist my poor father—tell me the value of the three."

"Woolverton is the most valuable, yielding clear eighteen hundred pounds, Low Barnsley is called twelve hundred, and Thorpe Regis nine—together they are worth at least two thousand."

"Now tell me, Henry, can I without assigning away the ownership of the soil, the right of the land, the fee simple, I believe they call it, order a sum to be paid annually to any one I

will, from the rents, for a term of years, or for ever?"

"Surely you can—a rent charge, for a term of years or in perpetuity—that is quite easy—but why not bequeath the estates at once, if you are resolved to do this now?"

"Because I do not wish it. I will not remove the ownership of one foot of the land, or the right of protecting one of the poor tenantry, from him to whom it should properly belong! Now listen to me, Henry—take up a pen and make notes of what I tell you. Find me a good and honest lawyer, an English one he should be—can you do this?"

"Easily, my dear Alice; there are, I regret to say, too many English of all ranks and professions here in Paris banished from home by these sad civil wars, to make it difficult to find soldier, or priest, or counsellor. I know a man who will do your bidding truly, and I myself was long enough a Templar to see that he do so. Now then proceed."

"Let him then draw up with the least possible delay my last will and testament—It will be but a short and easy one. I wish to bequeath all the lands, all the books and furniture, and

plate—in short every thing—to yourself; thinking that you would rather receive them as the affectionate bequest of a woman whom you love, than as the award of the law. All the old servants of the family and pensioners I bequeath likewise to your charity; charging you never to permit them to want homes, or food, or raiment. To my dear cousin, Madame de Gondi, five hundred pounds to buy a diamond solitaire in memory of her poor Alice—and now, now, Henry, comes the point of all—I fear that you may not approve it—but still it must be so; and if I grieve you by it—you will forgive me, for that it is the first grief that poor Alice Selby has ever caused you knowingly, the second that she *ever* caused you—Is it not so, dear Henry?"

"In the first place," answered Chaloner, "I have no right either to approve or disapprove, dearest Alice—and in the second place, I do not see why you should suppose me likely to disapprove, but at all events be quite sure that, as far as in me lies, I will do your wishes."

"This it is then," she went on quietly; "I wish to settle one thousand pounds per annum, upon Major Marmaduke Wyvil,"—and again

her voice failed her, so much that she could scarcely utter the words, "provided that he marry Mistress Isabella Oswald, within one year from the date of the bequest—that thousand pounds to be chargeable on the rents of Low Barnsley, and Thorpe Regis; but, if that sum cannot be raised without trenching on the revenues of Woolverton, then so much as the rents of the said manors will produce; during the term and to the end of his natural life, or to his widow, if she should survive him, until the end of her life, that widow being the said Mistress Oswald, the whole, after the death of one or both of them, to revert to yourself, Henry. I will not ask you, whether you think well or ill of this application of my property, for I know that you cannot think well of it; and I will not put you to pain by compelling you to say so. But I have thought much and deeply about it; and I have many, many reasons for desiring it —reasons which I cannot explain to you, but which are altogether satisfactory to myself—which are based on a good motive, which will, I think, produce a good end, and which, whatever be the consequences, will, at the least,

have this effect—to make me happy in the contemplation of what I shall have done, so long as I remain here."

"For me, Alice," answered Chaloner, "the last reason is all-sufficient; beyond this I will say nothing, except that I will go and have your wish forthwith placed in train of execution. Is there ought more that I can do?"

"Yes," she replied, "there is. I wish a rent-charge, or whatever you call it, of the same amount, and on the same conditions, and charged upon the same estates, to be made so as to be binding during my lifetime, from this very date—my object is to give him that sum now, and secure it to him during his life, so as to bring about his alliance with Isabella, whose father has refused his consent until Wyvil can show that he has an income of the amount named. This deed I wish to give him, and it must be so worded as to leave it doubtful by what means it was obtained, or upon what consideration."

"Do you feel sure that you are doing well, Alice, in bringing these two persons thus together, after all that has passed?"

"I think I do," she answered, "I feel sure that I do—and I trust I am not mistaken. At all events my intents are pure—the end of them is with Him, only, who knows and governs all things. Will you assist me, and that presently?"

"Be sure I will," said he; "I will go look to it directly."

"And how soon can it be effected?"

"I think this very evening;—but certainly to-morrow at the latest."

"Pray, then, let it be done at once; and, when it is done, let your lawyer bring both documents up hither forthwith to be signed. You and Madame de Gondi will, I doubt nothing, be my witnesses. I thank you, Henry; for this is very kind."

"Not kind at all," said he, "it is a simple duty," and with the words he left the room, taking the notes which he had made along with him; but she continued for some little time in deep and silent meditation.

"How very noble ever, and generous, and good, and gentle!" she exclaimed at length; "it is wonderful that I could not, that I cannot love

him—wonderful, truly! Oh! Wyvil! Wyvil!" and, with a deep sigh, she, too, arose, and leaving the deserted library, went to rejoin her cousin.

CHAPTER X.

It was already evening of the day that succeeded to the conversation between Chaloner and Alice; but the sun had not yet sunk below the horizon, and his slant rays were pouring a broad flood of lurid ruddy light into the western windows of the library, where there were gathered in that stately room a little group consisting of five persons—Madame de Gondi, and her young English cousin; Chaloner, and the lawyer, a fine bald-headed man with a high prominent forehead and an expression of intellect and benevolence, rather than of craft or shrewdness; and, lastly, the lawyer's clerk or scrivener, carrying a leathern case, which contained the documents.

All these, with the exception of the personage last named, were seated at the board, while he was reading aloud, in a clear, cold, and exceedingly unpleasant tone of voice, the "will," which had been drawn up strictly in accordance with the dictates of Alice; and it would have been no uninteresting study, whether for a painter, or a searcher into the minds of his fellow-men, the several expressions of the four fine faces of those who listened to that unimpressive reading. The countenance of the fair girl, whose "will" it was that occupied all ears, was perfectly intent on every clause and phrase, as she sat still, assenting now and then by an easy motion of her head, and evidently pleased and gratified at the luminous style in which her bequests were detailed. Chaloner's noble head expressed no more than earnest and unmixed attention; while Henriette de Gondi, although attentive to a degree, was restless and impatient; and so dissatisfied with the tenour of the whole testament, that it could not fail to be observed by every one in the library. The counsellor, by whose opinion the testament had been framed, while he took in the whole sense of every word, even the most trivial, which his

clerk recited, had, at the same time, leisure to let his eyes, and one faculty at least, if not more than one, of his capacious mind, wander over the other actors, and form an estimate, if not an opinion, of their motives.

At length the reading was brought to a conclusion; and, when the clerk had ceased, and the document was laid upon the table, "Now, cousin Alice," said Chaloner, "does this, which you have heard, embody all that you intend? or is there any error in our understanding of your bequests? For the rest, having carefully perused it, I can be answerable that this man has read it correctly."

"It is precisely what I wish—precisely, to the letter!" answered Alice. "What now remains to make it binding and complete?"

"Your signature and seal," answered Chaloner, "but"——

"Well, then, give me the pen, and I will sign it now," said she, "and you two can witness it."

"I was about to say," interposed Chaloner, "that I should strongly recommend your taking it yourself, and reading it again in private."

"No, no!" she replied,—"oh, no! my mind is

perfectly made up, and I shall not change it;—so give me the pen."

"As you will," answered he; "but it concerns myself too nearly, that I should witness it. But our good friend here, Counsellor Mansfield, will be a very fitting person."

"Is Mistress Selby of the requisite age to make her signature to this valid?" asked Mansfield.

"Oh yes, indeed," said she, with a smile, "I have been of age some months, as the parish register at Woolverton, and this book," producing with the word her father's Bible, wherein the date of her birth was recorded, "will quite sufficiently testify."

"I had not thought you had spent so many summers, my dear young lady," answered the lawyer, "but though you have, you are still very young to be the sole proprietor of so fine a landed fortune."

"Too young!" she said, with a deep sigh, her eyes again filling with tears, for her loss was still too recent that she could bear to hear it spoken of by a stranger,—"far—far too young! —But come, give me the pen, I would fain have

this over—besides, there is the other paper, which must be read afterwards."

"But, Alice, my dear girl!" exclaimed Madame de Gondi, who had been evidently anxious for some time to speak, "I cannot sign this will as a witness; and I must say I hope that you will consent to alter it, for"—

"Oh, no!" interrupted Henry Chaloner, so decidedly that it was impossible for Henriette to proceed; "*you* are too scrupulous by half! My dear madame, that little legacy of five hundred pounds cannot unfit you for a witness." And as he spoke he fixed his clear gray eye upon her with a glance so meaning that she understood immediately, that he wished her to comprehend more than his words expressed. "At all events," he added, "if you are not convinced, just permit me to say three words to you in private, when, I doubt not, I can remove your scruples. Alice, excuse us for one moment—your pardon, counsellor!" and he led her out into the next saloon, and closed the door behind them.

"It was not that! it was not that, at all!" said she, in great agitation.—"You quite misunderstood me."

"No! my dear lady, I did not. It is the bequest of the rent charge."

"Oh! yes! yes! yes!" she replied,—"it is quite! quite too horrible! quite too unnatural! to see her thus endow the man who slew her father—for he did slay him, as much as if he had smitten him with his sword!"

"I know it," he replied gloomily—"*I* know it, and *she* must not; and therefore *we* must let this pass. Believe me, I regret it, loathe it, as much as you can do—but yet, believe me, it must be—unless, indeed, we reveal to her the part this villain played in her father's death-scene, and"—

"By so doing, you would say, *we* should *slay* her,"—interrupted Henriette, greatly moved—"Is it not so, General Henry?"

"Even so!" he replied—"and gain nothing by it. No other argument can avail ought, save to annoy and lacerate her feelings. So fixed is she, so high, and so full of her good and great intent, that it were an easier feat for some new Archimedes to unsphere this puissant planet, than to warp her, or turn her from the path, of what she truly believes right. Besides! although Alice mean it not — bethink you,

lady—didst ever hear, or read, of a more grand, and noble—I had wellnigh said—Godlike vengeance!—If this be not to heap coals of fire upon his head, I know not what it is—that—that is half the cause why I consent!—think you, the recreant and dastard knave will not writhe, like the wretch upon the mortal rack, and sweat blood in his bitter agony, even as he receives—for mark my words, the craven *will* receive—these alms from her whom he has murdered? Lady, we *must* consent to it! but think not that this base wretch shall go scatheless, or his crimes unavenged! Surely there sitteth one aloft, without whose knowledge not so much as a sparrow falleth out of heaven!"

His eloquent and fervid manner, the splendid tones of his deep rich voice, suppressed in order that it might not reach her ears of whom he spoke, and above all something almost prophetic in his confident denunciation, had its full weight on the mind of his companion, so that she grasped his hand, and answered only, "You are the wiser!—now let us return," and as they re-entered the library, she addressed Alice, in a tone far more subdued and grave than usual, saying "Your cousin has convinced

me, as he promised that he would; I am ready to witness."

"I thank you, it is all right now," said Alice, smiling, as she affixed her signature and seal to the testament, and went through all the legal forms, witnessed by Mansfield and Henriette de Gondi.

The reading of the deed succeeded; and, as it was much shorter than the other, and as no opposition followed, this was accomplished speedily, and all was finished. The will was delivered instantly to Chaloner, in whose custody Alice insisted that it should remain; but the deed she retained herself, saying that she knew how to dispose of it—duplicate copies of either document, unsigned, but with the date of signature, and the names of the witnesses endorsed thereon, were also handed over by the lawyer to his fair client; and then, after refreshments had been offered and refused, he declared his business was at an end, and courteously withdrew. He had not been long gone, however, before Alice, whose manner throughout the evening had denoted much excitement, made an excuse to her friends, and retired at a very early

hour to her own chamber, leaving the others sitting together in the large library.

For several minutes after her departure, they both kept silence, pondering in their own minds the things which they had heard and witnessed. At last Madame de Gondi spoke, "Surely, this is the most strange and fearful tragedy that ever I have heard of. It is one of those things that happen at times here on earth, that almost make me doubt heaven's justice. As excellent and pious an old man, as innocent and pure a girl, as ever bowed in prayer, brought down to sorrow and the grave, by one villain's baseness; and that villain rewarded for his very crime and treason."

"Rewarded *here!*" answered Chaloner.—"But who shall tell of that which is to come hereafter! No! no! dear lady, this *ought* to make no man doubt heaven's justice. Heaven's Lord professeth not to reward or punish here, but suffereth these contradictions to exist, this crime triumphant, and this persecuted virtue, only to teach us where to fix our treasures, and to build our hopes, not in the perishable present, but in the everlasting future. Besides!

who shall pretend to know or meter the judgments of the Everlasting? Who shall presume to style this mortal miserable, or that happy? Truly it is not gratified ambition, nor love satiated, nor gorged avarice, but a pure soul and blameless conscience, that gives happiness. Think you that Wyvil, in all the fervour of his passion for this new beauty, in all the pride of winning the rapture of possessing her, conscious within himself of his own vileness—think you, I say, that he will be more happy; or the deserted dying girl, who seems to us so wretched?"

"Doubtless, within herself, *she* will," replied Madame de Gondi. "Indeed I believe that in the very midst of her unhappiness she might be called happy now."

"And he," said Henry Chaloner, sternly, "in the midst of his triumph—wretched!—nay more! which one of us can tell how long that triumph shall endure?—Perchance even now the Lord hath raised up for himself a temporal avenger! for surely I believe that with the crimes, as with the virtues of mankind, HE worketh, as with tools, his own great ends! Most surely, I believe, that he hath put it, many

times, into the souls of men that they should do this thing or that—and lo! they have done it straightway, not knowing wherefore; and very like imagining they were accomplishing some small and selfish object, when, of a truth, they were God's ministers of vengeance."

"And think you then, that it is lawful for a man to avenge his own wrongs?" asked Henriette, almost awed by the deep voice and flashing eye of the enthusiast, "or those of his friends and kindred?"

"I know that he hath said 'Vengeance is mine!' and therefore I do not think man, at his own fancy, may usurp Heaven's prerogative. That men have felt themselves commissioned unto vengeance, so that that they could not anywise resist the bidding from on high, though they have watched and fasted and prayed fervently that that cup might be removed from them, I well know; for I have seen it? Sure am I, that they were ministers of punishment, appointed, how far *so* justified, I dare not even to conjecture."

A wild and painful thought crossed Henriette's mind, and caused her to look up intently into the earnest face of the speaker; but there

was nothing fanatical or ecstatic in the noble thoughtful forehead, or meditative eye; and after a moment she continued, "and how should a man know, General Henry, whether indeed he is commissioned so; or if it be but a vain delusion, fed by his own resentments, and fostered by the instigation of the evil one?"

"Ay! how, indeed?" said Chaloner, in answer, very thoughtfully; "there is the question —in that 'how?' If it were not for that —" and he fell for a time into a fit of gloomy musing, Madame de Gondi watching with an anxious and half terrified expression every variation of his features, but by and by he said, "a man should greatly doubt all such suggestions, and examine himself carefully, and pray; and even then, I fear, he would be very oft misled. Such thoughts are dangerous at best; I am sorry that we spoke of them. But see, we have worn the time away with our conversation, that the night is already far advanced. Good rest to you to-night. I will call here to-morrow, and shall hope, as we talked of doing, to persuade our dear invalid to take the air either on horseback, or in your carriage."

"Oh! not on horseback, that would be quite

impossible! she is too weak, by far; you do not at all dream how weak she is, when not aroused by circumstance—but we will talk of this to-morrow."

In the mean time Alice Selby had not, as her friends imagined, retired to rest; but when she reached her chamber had sent her maiden, Margaret, for writing implements and paper, and had continued constantly occupied until this late hour of the night. For a considerable period it seemed that she could not satisfy herself with the style or tenour of that which she was desirous of composing, for she commenced a dozen times, and, after writing a few lines, laid down her pen, and read what she had written, and tore it up and committed it to the flames as if in disgust; at length, however, she seemed to hit on the right view, for she continued to move her pen very rapidly for many minutes, her thoughts appearing to flow from her mind more rapidly than her hand could commit them to the paper; and all the while the big round tears were plashing down upon the letter, she perfectly unconscious that it was so, until the words were obliterated almost as fast as she formed them; and when she had finished

one side of the sheet, and was about to read it over, before turning it, she discovered that her labour had been absolutely lost.

"Oh!" she exclaimed aloud, as she saw what she had been doing, "this is extremely weak and foolish, and I will do so no more." And she rose up, and walked across the room, and bathed her brow and eyes, with water from the ewer, and returned, seeming quite composed, and sat down again to her task; and this time she kept her word, for she was no more affected in the like sort, but wrote with a clear eye and steady hand, till she had done what she desired.

"Marmaduke"—thus ran the letter which cost her so much pains—"or, for the first and last time, *dear* Marmaduke; I have thought much and deeply on our last meeting; and if I cannot quite acquit you of having sinned against me, I must confess that, in some sort, I have wronged you. This—for we two shall never meet again in this world—I wish to repair. I I do believe that you have not wilfully, or with a preconceived determination, wronged me as you have done. Your constancy was not of that enduring quality, your mind not of that vigorous and resolute stamp, to resist absence,

and to brave temptation; this, perhaps, was not, and should not, therefore, be esteemed your fault, but the misfortune rather and frailty of your nature. I have, moreover, seen, and learned to know her, since we two parted, who is happier than I have proved in gaining, may she be happier than I am, likewise, in retaining your affections. And having seen and known her, I recognise, in her high soul, and free and fearless spirit, a spell more potent than any I possess, to hold dominion over the love of a mind like yours, to bring out your excellences—for you have many such—to their brighter lustre, and to restrain the foibles which obscure them.

"That you should love her, therefore, and that your love for her should surpass that which you once entertained for me, I do not marvel. Perhaps the first was but a fancy born of circumstance and gratitude. Had you dealt uprightly by me, and candidly, all had been well. Now, mark me. If I have any thing for which to forgive, I do so—oh! how freely, and how happily! And, if my words, wrung from me by the bitterness of passion, have wronged you in any thing, forgive me likewise! But do not, Marmaduke, from this that I write,

deceive yourself, or vainly fancy that I repent me of my late decision. No! I am fixed and firm as ever—nay, but a thousand times more firm, since I have learned to love that beautiful and noble creature, whom I give to you for your wife. Yes! start not as you read—*I* give to you! Cherish her! love her! honour her! —for she is worthy of all cherishing, all love, all honour! Treasure her as the apple of your eye! cleave to her as your surest stay in time of trouble! Thus, and thus only, can you now show the love that once you felt, the kindness that I hope you will feel for ever to poor, poor, Alice Selby. Yes, Marmaduke! I give her to you—may you be happy! and to be so, you must be virtuous and true!

"I send you, herewith, that which enables you to perform the conditions of Sir Henry Oswald. It is my own to bestow, and with my whole soul I bestow it. Do not shrink back. Do not refuse my gift, Marmaduke,—do not, I beseech you. If your proud heart disdain it, think and remember, I am proud likewise, yet I humble myself to entreat you, if ever I have done you aught of kindness, if you *now* owe me any thing of love, or gratitude, or reparation,

refuse not my poor boon! It is the only thing that now can make her, who was once *your* Alice, happy. By the life which I gave you, by the love which I bore you, by the affections squandered on you, the hopes blighted by you, by your own happiness, and hers, to whom this gift shall unite you, I adjure you! Hard though the task may be to your haughty soul, refuse me not. No! Marmaduke, you *will* not!

"The old man, the good old man, who loved you—he is dead! I tell not this to grieve you, for he knew nothing that had passed, from me; nor, I believe suspected any thing. His last words were a blessing upon me, and, I doubt not, upon you likewise; and in this knowledge I rejoice daily. I would not for the world that he had thought me wronged, for that would bitterly have grieved him; and, perhaps, good and forgiving as he was, he would not then have blessed you. He is gone, Marmaduke, and I shall, ere long, follow him; and you will give us both a tear, and a green spot in your memory. And you too, Marmaduke, you must one day go hence, and your bright Isabella; and we shall, one day, meet and know each other, not as now, 'through a glass darkly, but

then face to face.' And then! then, Marmaduke, let Isabella thank me for having made her yours, and tell me you have made *her* happy, and that shall well repay me for all *my* transient sorrows. Fear not, then, scruple not to accept this my parting gift; two persons only, in the wide world, beside myself, know of it; and, trust me, their mouths will be for ever silent. Farewell, then, my beloved,—for so, in this last parting, *so* I must call you. Peace, and prosperity, and love, and blessings be about you. Farewell; and when you think of Alice Selby, think of her as of one, who loved you to the very last, and prayed for you, and blessed you, and will bless you—dying.

"For the last time,

"Your ALICE.

"*Hotel de Gondi, Nov.* 20, 1652."

CHAPTER XI.

A WEEK had passed, since Alice despatched her letter, to which she had received no answer save in the report, that shortly reached her ears, and the positive announcement, that soon followed the report of the approaching marriage of Major Wyvil and the fair Isabella Oswald. Soon after this announcement had become public, and the busy world had ceased to marvel at the less than nine days' wonder, she had received a visit from the grateful girl herself; who, full as she was of her own hopes and fears and happiness, and gratitude, could not but notice and deplore the ravages which the few days, since they had met, had made upon her lovely

benefactress. The cough was now almost incessant, and visibly painful to the sufferer; the hectic glow was fixed and constant; the ghastly glitter of the eyes, once so soft and tender, was now unnatural and terrible; and the emaciation of her whole frame, frightful to look upon, the light seeming almost to shine through the delicate and slender hands. Yet was she kind, as she had ever been, and thoughtful, and more attentive to the feelings of any one than to her own.

She received Isabella with an evident and unfeigned joy; congratulated her upon the prospect of her future bliss; wept over her, and kissed her fondly as a sister; and ere they parted, she called her maiden and sent for a little case of morocco, containing a small set of beautiful and costly diamonds, which she put into her hands, saying "They were my dear mother's, Isabella; and, though the setting is old-fashioned, the stones are of a good water, and the devices have been much admired. I shall never wear them; and I have none dear to me, to whom to leave them; do me the kindness then, to take them, and wear them at your bridal. When you look on

them, they will serve at least to remind you of one, who will be far from this world, long before you have waked from your first dream of married bliss."

"As if by any means—or ever—I could forget you—forget one to whom I owe every thing!" And with the words they embraced each other, and wept burning tears each on the other's bosom, until Madame de Gondi entered, and insisted that Alice should not be so agitated any longer; and, with one last embrace, those strangely made friends parted.

A week had passed—and the morning had arrived, on which they two were to be made one. It was a clear and lovely sunrise as ever shone out of the heavens; there had been a slight touch of frost on the preceding night, and the atmosphere was clear and limpid, and the sky blue, as though it had been the month of June instead of November; and yet the air was from the westward, soft and balmy; for the warmth of the sunbeams had already touched the earth, and dispelled the hoary rime; and a few birds, the last of autumn's songsters, were chirping merrily, forgetful that the genial days had indeed flown, and that this, which wore

their semblance, was but a loiterer in the lap of winter. Every thing wore a bright and cheering aspect; the very sparrows, in the gutters and on the housetops, little smoke-dried and dingy effigies of birds, were twittering their hymns of rejoicing at the pleasant time, and appeared more than half inclined to anticipate the season, and commence their loves and courtships.

There were few hearts, perhaps, in that great city, even of the neediest and most unhappy, but derived some gratification from the uncommon beauty of the weather; but there was one to which neither that cause nor many others, which would have been the sources of much joy to most men, brought any thing that could be properly called pleasure, much less content or happiness. That one was Wyvil—young, handsome, ardent, brilliant of intellect, endowed with that nervous temperament whence springs the keenest appetite for excitement, well-esteemed by his comrades, rapidly rising in his profession, the envied bridegroom of the richest and the fairest girl in Paris—Marmaduke Wyvil was not happy; and that too on his bridal morning. Alone he sat in his large chamber—

alone, and in that chamber, as he surely thought for the last time. His morning meal lay on the board scarce touched, although it had consisted of the choicest delicacies of the French kitchen, but a large flask of Burgundy stood nearly emptied at his elbow, with a tall drinking-glass drained to the very dregs; while in an easy-chair, beside the hearth, a rich furred dressing-robe cast recklessly about him, and his unstockinged feet thrust into his embroidered slippers, with a sad listless wandering expression in his eye, and his whole air uncommonly depressed and altered, sat the young cavalier.

Several times during the morning his favourite servant had come in with various articles of splendid clothing, which, after somewhat ostentatiously displaying, as if in the hope to catch his master's eye, he had arranged upon the chairs and sofa. But, if such were his motive, he had failed utterly; although in good sooth the articles, which he from time to time arranged and disarranged, only as it would appear for the pleasure of arranging them again, were of a beauty and richness that might have fixed the gaze of a colder and wiser man than the young soldier, who so listlessly surveyed

them. There was the shirt of the finest cambric, with frills and ruffles of Mechlin lace, such as a duchess now would envy; there was the long cravat with its deep edge of *point d'Espagne*, the snow-white silken hose with their embroidered clocks of silver; the *hauts de chausse*, and jerkin of white watered taffeta laid down upon the seams with silver cords; the short cloak of blue velvet, lined with white satin, and studded with real pearls; the court sword with its hilt and sheath, and baldric, all white to match the dress, and studded like the cloak, with pearls. The very hat and plume, and shoes, with their huge satin roses, were in accordance with the rest of the habit, and composed as magnificent an apparel, as could be worn by the most splendid cavalier in those days of profuse expenditure and gorgeous decoration. Yet, though by no means indisposed to splendour or inaccessible to the vanity of personal appearance, much to the wonder of his assiduous valet, Wyvil took no note of the glittering raiment, nor seemed to be aware that the hours were passing rapidly.

Three different times, Clement addressed him with entreaties that he would suffer him to

arrange his hair, and that he would begin to dress, but each time he was repulsed sharply; until, at last, getting quite out of patience—"Well, Master Marmaduke," said the man, "I have been praying you to array yourself these two hours, and better, and there, the clock of St. Germain l'Auxerrois is chiming ten of the morning—and here comes Monsieur de Bellechassaigne!—Now, if you mean to be married to-day, after all, you must needs get up and dress you; and little time enough left you to do it." And while he was yet speaking, a hasty firm footstep came up the staircase, and the clash of a rapier jingling against the steps, mixed with the burden of a light French love-song, chanted in a rich manly voice. As if ashamed of his delay, and not wishing to be caught in so disconsolate a mood, Marmaduke now resigned his head to the care of his experienced valet, enduing at the same time his comely limbs with the almost transparent hose, which he had so neglected till this moment; now, however, he made some passing comment on the fineness of their texture, but it was all too late to appease the offended dignity of his servant, who main-

tained a stately silence, when the door flew open, and in rushed Bellechassaigne, full-dressed, as became the friend and supporter of the bridegroom. "Bon dieu!" exclaimed the partisan, as his eye fell on Wyvil, "only beginning now to dress!—ten thousand thunders!—we shall all be too late—and, my life on it, if you are half a minute behindhand, the marriage is at an end, for ever—and, for that matter, I should not wonder if that old Amadis, Sir Henry, were to insist on running us both through the body!"

"Nor I, upon my honour," answered Wyvil, gloomily, "or even if we are in good time. I cannot tell wherefore it is, but there is a strange shadow over me this morning, and I am certain some ill will befall me before nightfall!"

"Tush, man! cheer up your love-sick wits! you—Marmaduke Wyvil—you, desponding!—you, at whose luck all Paris is wild with astonishment, and green with envy!"

"I wish to God! all Paris had my luck, then!" answered Wyvil. "They are quite welcome to it, I am sure."

"What, in the devil's name, does your master

mean, sirrah?" exclaimed Bellechassaigne, turning short round upon Clement.

"Master has been this way, sir, all the morning, but, for my soul, I cannot divine wherefore!" answered the man, shrugging his shoulders.

"You cannot—ay? A pretty fellow you are to call yourself a gentleman's gentleman—God's mercy!" cried the gay young man, with a laugh. "So, as I shall cut both your ears off in five minutes, if he is not better, I advise you to bring out instantly two flasks of his very best Champagne, and two of his biggest goblets—do you hear?—for we must try to cure him."

"Yes, sir, I hear," replied the man, without desisting from his sedulous attention to Wyvil's flowing curls.

"Are you without there, Peter? Bring two flasks of the dry Sillery, and the large beakers!"

The order was obeyed immediately; and, twisting the wire off the neck, Bellechassaigne uncorked one bottle, and at once decanted the whole of its creaming contents into the two large beakers, and, forcing one upon Wyvil,

drained his own at a draught. "Very passable wine that, on my honour!" said he, laughing. "Ah! you feel better I perceive already; there is a twinkle beginning to steal into the corner of your eye—by the time you have quaffed the other, you will be all right. Oh! none of your remonstrances; here, down with it;—it is not altogether so very difficult to swallow. Now, tell me honestly: do not you think yourself the most ungrateful dog in Europe, to be railing thus at your bad fortune, when you have won the heart of the finest and most difficult girl in all France; and gained—by witchcraft the people say, and by the Lord I half believe it!—her father's leave to wed her? I wish—wish did I say!—I would give ten years of my life, if I could prosper so in my wooing,—and yet my sweet little Louise, God bless her! loves me as truly as I do her;—and her good father, the excellent old Marquis of St. Eloy, affects me well enough, and all would do very well, I fancy, if it were not for that infernal old she-dragon, whom, for his own sins, and mine too, I suppose, he took to wife when Louise's mother had been dead some six years. Poor devil! he is sorry enough for it now; but little good that does me, or will

do me, unless she will make a stolen match of it, and that she never will, I am certain."

By this time Marmaduke, between the effects of the wine he had drunk, and his friends lively raillery, had partially recovered his natural character and spirits, and began to talk in a gay strain, though it might be seen that it was not without an effort, while Bellechassaigne, whose buoyancy of manner, springing from a free heart and a mind unconscious of any serious wrong, nothing could check, continued rattling on in a style that soon distracted Wyvil's mind from the gloomy notions, which had possessed it during all the morning.

"By heaven!" he said, as Marmaduke, who was now fully dressed, with the exception of his hat and short cloak, was knotting on the baldric of his rapier, "by heaven! that is an exquisite device —that pure white suit; and admirably will the rich mazarine blue of the cloak relieve it. So, Clement, so—a little more this way—more over the left shoulder—that is it. Now the hat, and the gloves—ay, that is it. A very perfect cavalier, in faith! I do not think the fair Isabella hath any right to complain. Faugh!" he added, looking contemptuously down upon

his own gay and tasteful garb—"faugh! my knave tailor has decked me out like one of your English May-day mummers, whom you talk about—and yet I thought it not so much amiss before I saw yours—there is something singular, original, and most appropriate, about that plain white silk."

"You do yourself and your tailor wrong, Bellechassaigne," replied Wyvil, smiling, "the peach-coloured linings of your trunk hose and doublet, and the peach-coloured nether-stocks, suit excellently well with the deep violet; and the embroideries of your cloak and baldric are, to my taste, of an absolute fancy. Here, Clement," he continued, tossing a full purse to the man, "divide that with your fellows, keeping the lion's share yourself; and, hark ye! when the wedding's over, see all my mails, and armours, and the like, removed to Sir Henry Oswald's. And then I would advise you to come hither, and get as drunk as possible with all that is left in the cellar, before the landlord pounces on it. The furniture I give to you, for yourself. Now, go to church with me!"

"Surely, sir, surely!" replied the servant, with a low bow, "I am all dressed, except my

coat; and Gregory and Peter are in their new liveries, with 'favours.' We will be ready in a moment. Sir Henry's coach has not come yet."

They had not long to wait, however; for, before many minutes had elapsed, the state-coach of the wealthy baronet, all crimson velvet, and rich gilding, and plate glass, drew up at the door; and Marmaduke, with his friend, instantly entered, and proceeded to their destination, with twenty, or more, of body servants, gallantly armed and mounted, following close behind. They were not long in reaching, although they drove but slowly, the house of the English baronet, before the front of which thirty or forty carriages, and, at least, three hundred mounted servants, with led-horses for their masters, were assembled. A great crowd had collected, even before the arrival of the bridegroom, and a still larger had come up with the carriage that conveyed him, all the innumerable loiterers and idlers of the streets having fallen into a sort of rude procession, partly from curiosity, and partly in the hopes of coming in for a share of the largesse, which was still, in some cases, distributed; although, like other

usages of the feudal time, this custom was fast falling into desuetude.

The persons of both these young officers were familiar to the people; and the high character, which they bore as daring partisans, continually courting peril, had rendered them especial favourites; so that, as they descended from the vehicle, a loud shout arose from the multitude, and was repeated several times even after they had passed out of sight into the vestibule of the mansion; until a strong body of mounted police came up at a trot, and dispersed the people; the government being at that period extremely jealous of any gathering concourse, as well they might from their experience of Parisian mobs at the barricades, and other tumults of the Fronde.

The whole suite of apartments was thrown open, and many guests of dignity and rank were assembled of both sexes, to witness the signing of the contract, and partake, as was the custom of the day, a splendid banquet or collation, previous to the performance of the sacred rite, which was to render that contract indissoluble; and which in this case was to take place in the magnificent cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris,

Many there were, in that gay crowd, of splendid forms and stately presence, nor did these forms lack setting off by all that can be fancied of sumptuous and rich in garb and garniture; but so near were the two young men, who now entered as principals in that which was about to happen—the bridegroom, namely, and his friend, to the perfection of high manly beauty, that there was a brief pause in the conversation, followed by a low hum of admiration. They had scarce entered the saloon, however, and interchanged a few words with some personal acquaintances, when old Sir Henry advanced from an inner room to meet them, and shaking his intended son-in-law cordially by the hand, conducted him with his friend to the withdrawing-room, where the fair bride awaited them. Having no mother, on whose care and tenderness to rely at this trying moment, Isabella Oswald was supported only by a bevy of young and lovely girls; but among these were numbered several, whose names stood highest among the high-born daughters of her adopted land.

Yet young and lovely as they were, they only seemed to act as foils to the superior beauty of the bride. Whether in form or face, it would

be scarcely possible to fancy any thing that could have surpassed the splendour of her whole appearance, on that eventful morning. All, that at other times had seemed objectionable in her peculiar style, was so subdued and softened down that no one, how severely critical soever, could have demurred to her air, her carriage, or her aspect. The full black eyes, that could at times so boldly and so brightly lighten on beholders, were now suffused with a soft languor, and half seen through their long dark lashes expressed no sentiments but those of maiden modesty not all unmixed with tenderness, and awe at her new situation. The haughty curve of her imperial mouth was melted down to a slight dimple—the proud elevation of her queenly neck was meekly lowered. All seemed to betoken the sweet conscious love, and gentle bashfulness of a young and happy maiden.

Her black luxuriant ringlets fell down in a rich maze on either side of her face until their long curls rested in beauteous contrast on her snowy bosom; but at the back of her head the hair was collected into a thick classical knot, encircled by a wreath of orange flowers, from which the bridal veil, of Brussels point, flowed down

in ample draperies to her feet. Above her fair and regal brow she wore a small tiara of splendid diamonds in a rare antique setting, the gift of Alice Selby; and all the body of her dress, from the downward curve of her lovely bosom to the girdle, which encompassed her slender waist, gleamed like a cuirass of the same inestimable gems; for so thickly were they sown upon it, that not half an inch of the material could be discovered, although that material, of which the robe was formed likewise, was a superb brocade of silver and white damask; with a long train above it of snow-white velvet, bordered with cloth of silver, and looped with knots of pearl. The falling sleeves exposed the whole of her exquisitely rounded arms, and fairy hands, ungloved and glittering with the choicest gems. She was indeed, for beauty, one in ten thousand.

What wonder then that Wyvil, fickle, and most impulsive ever, should once again forget the less commanding charms of Alice, and yield himself a willing slave, and dream of endless bliss in the possession of so rare a being; when even Bellechassaigne, the bold, light-hearted, reckless, and unimaginative soldier of the day,

was so deeply moved, not by her gorgeous beauty only—for that he had seen many a day unmoved before—but by the whole tone and style of her subdued and chastened loveliness, that he bowed his knee to her as he approached, and hesitated, and was embarrassed like an awkward inexperienced youth on his first presentation to some mighty monarch, and scarcely could find words to express his sincere congratulations and kind wishes. Much time, however, was not given to him for consideration, for the ceremony of reading, signing, and witnessing the marriage contract in due form was instantly commenced; and as this duty, for the most part, lay with him, until it became necessary for the parties to affix their signatures, he was withdrawn from their vicinity, and Marmaduke eagerly seized the occasion offered him of whispering some words of passion and of tender encouragement into the ears of her whom for the moment he did really believe he loved beyond all others of her sex.

The time arrived, and each in turn took up the pen and applied it to that powerful and binding document; but here it was observed by Bellechassaigne, that while the signature of Isabella was affixed in a clear beautiful Italian

hand, perfectly steady and unshaken, the name of Wyvil was scarcely legible, but feeble, blotted, uncertain, and betraying singularly, as he thought afterwards, a mind embarrassed and uneasy—although his ordinary signature was in a bold and dashing style. This ceremony finished, the bride was led out to the banqueting-room by her father, Wyvil giving his hand to the first, and Bellechassaigne taking charge of the second of her bride-maidens. The rest followed as they might; and all were marshalled to the splendid board; and the feast was spread, and the rare wines were filled out into brimming bumpers, and toasts were quaffed, and all was mirth and joy. But when that mirth began to wax uproarious, and the attention of the guests was diverted somewhat from the bride, her father gently withdrew her from the table, her bride-maids and a few of the more immediate friends of the family rising and following with Marmaduke and Bellechassaigne; and handed her to the carriages in waiting to convey them to the church.

The lamps were burning at the high altar in the superb cathedral of Notre Dame, and near it in his grand sacerdotal robes, with his inferior

clergy around him, stood the Archbishop of Paris himself to perform the sacred rite, and administer the sacrament—one of the holiest in the Romish ritual. A few spectators had assembled in the body of the building; and, as is ever the custom in Roman Catholic churches, several groups were kneeling, here and there, at the various shrines, quietly and devoutly praying in their own hearts, and observing nothing of the gay party that came up the chancel, with rustling robes, and waving plumes, and all the pomp of this world's blithest pageantry.

Among the spectators was a tall young man, with a fine brow and very intellectual face, to whom, she knew not why, the eyes of Isabella were attracted as by a species of fascination. He was dressed very plainly in a suit of dark-brown velvet, slashed in a few places with black satin, and embroidered with black lace; a taffeta scarf of the same colour with his pourpoint, supported his long horseman's sword, and he had boots and spurs upon his feet, as if he had just dismounted from his horse. It was nothing, therefore, in his garb that riveted Isabella's notice, for that was but the habit of an ordinary gentleman; nor, to say truly, was

it his personal appearance either; for though a very handsome man, he was not to compare with Wyvil in beauty of face or feature; while his figure, although perfectly well made and symmetrical, was more athletic, and certainly less graceful.

There was, however, something in his countenance which both attracted and disturbed her,—an air of calm and majestic dignity, with a character of benevolence and goodness palpably breathing out from every feature; but, as her eye met his, she fancied at the moment that there was in it likewise an expression of interest and pity for herself, which she could not at all comprehend or fathom. All this passed in an instant, for Isabella withdrew her glance as soon as she saw that the stranger noticed it; and still more to her astonishment, on looking round to Wyvil, she perceived that he also seemed to recognise that calm and grave spectator, and to be discomposed, if not embarrassed by his presence.

Meantime the services commenced; and as they did so, a carriage stopped at the great door, attended by one or two servants in liveries of green and gold. Two female figures, one a lady

evidently, and the other as it seemed, a soubrette or attendant, issued from it; and the former leaning on the other's arm, came up a side aisle, quickly but silently, to a spot whence they could command a view of the proceedings; near to the stranger who stood there, but separated from him by the base of a great clustered column, which hindered either party from discovering the presence of the other. Meantime, the ceremonial went on; and still, strange as it may appear, the eyes of Isabella, guided by some unaccountable and irresistible impulse, were drawn furtively towards that grave spectator, and still she saw that his clear passionless glance was fixed upon her, full of a soft compassion; and above all she perceived that he who was soon to be her lord and husband, was overawed and crestfallen, and actually trembled under the observant gaze of that mysterious person—and well he might, for it was Henry Chaloner!

So heavily did this strange sense grow on her mind, mixed with a dim presentiment of evil, that she too was very greatly troubled; and half repented the irrevocable step which she was taking, and half began to wish that something might occur to hinder it—a thousand

things, which she had barely noticed when they happened, now coming vividly upon her memory, and filling her with strong doubts and suspicions as to the faith of Wyvil. Still she mechanically knelt, and rose, and knelt again, and made the due responses, until she was yet more distracted by the sound of suppressed sobs and stifled weeping, which was now heard by all the party, and that so sensibly, that every eye was turned to the quarter whence it came. The service had now reached the point, after which there can be no change, no retractation more, for ever, unless death shall divide whom God hath joined together; and the tremendous adjuration was even now upon the lips of the archbishop—when the veiled lady sank with a deep sob forward on the pavement, the black gauze falling off, which had concealed her features, and disclosing the pale inanimate face of sweet Alice Selby. And at the same time the girl, who had accompanied her, uttered a piercing shriek, and cried aloud, "Help—oh! help my dear lady—she is dying!" All, in a moment, was confusion.

At such a sight Wyvil's first, truest—only true—passion returned with all its ancient

force; and leaving his fair bride, forgetful of all else but that dear fainting girl, he darted forward to assist her whom he had so shamefully deserted, exclaiming, "Look up! look up, once again, *my* Alice!" But as he stooped to raise her, his shoulder was seized by a stern heavy gripe, and the deep rich voice of Chaloner rang in his ear, "Back, villain! it is thou hast done this thing!—Back, I say! tempt me no further!"

At the same moment, the archbishop closed his missal, seeing at once the cause of what had happened. But Wyvil, as he felt himself thrust firmly backward, remembered himself a little, and shaking off the grasp of Henry, said fiercely, "You shall answer me for this, General Chaloner!"

"Pshaw!" said the other, with an expression the most bitterly contemptuous; and turning round he beheld Alice Selby supported in the arms of the noble Isabella, her face literally watered with the burning tears that fell from the eyes of her late rival, and covered with eager kisses from that fair mouth no longer haughty or imperious, but tender and affectionate as that of a young mother.

"Thanks, gentle lady!" exclaimed Henry Chaloner, "thanks for myself, and my poor cousin! a thousand thanks for your kindness! But suffer me to bear her to the carriage—I knew not that she would come hither, but fearing that she might, I ventured to intrude upon your ceremonial, which we have interrupted so inopportunely."

"So opportunely, rather you should say, sir," answered Isabella, as she rose to her full height, resigning the unhappy girl to her protector.

"I thank God for it! most opportunely, in order to preserve me from a fate too dreadful." At this moment, Marmaduke, who had not heard the words which were passing between Chaloner and Isabella, advanced and offered her his hand, as if to lead her back again toward the altar. "No!" she said, bright indignation flashing from her eyes, and her beautiful lip curling with utter scorn—"no, sir! I am no longer blinded—I can see all now!—ay, all,—every thing. Well may you quail and cower! Begone, out of my sight,—begone! How dared you to imagine, that Isabella Oswald would brook baseness? How dared you to hope even, that Isabella Oswald would build up her hap-

piness upon a sister's sorrow? What fooled you to the fancy, that Isabella Oswald could entertain a feeling save of disgust and scorn and loathing for a knave, a liar, and a traitor!"

"Brave heart!" said Henry Chaloner, looking admiringly on her fine form, dilated as it were with generous ire, and her face glorious with the best heroism of her sex,—"brave heart, and noble! How could I so misapprehend thee?" and with the words he bore away the still unconscious girl, in his strong arms to her carriage; but Isabella heard him not, nor paused, but, turning from the baffled bridegroom, continued: "Your pardon, lord archbishop; God, of his gracious mercy, has this day interposed to save me from a doom, to which the most abhorred death were luxury;—unto Him, therefore, endless praise is due, and when I shall have schooled my heart by solitude and prayer, most gratefully and humbly shall that praise be rendered. Meantime, my lord, your pardon,—Nay, father, nay," she continued, seeing that angry feelings were aroused, and fiery words were bandied to and fro, among the martial audience,—"nay, father, I insist—Monsieur de Bellechassaigne, I do entreat—De Rochefort, I

command you!—This is my own deed, my own quarrel, and none but I *shall* answer it! Father, you will not do your daughter—nor you, De Rochefort, your cousin such foul and shameful wrong as to make her the theme of the vile world's scurril comments, the cause of broil and duel!—Besides, you must not do *him* so much honour! The swords of brave men are for the brave and honourable; nor must they be degraded by the punishing of so low knavery and treason. The world's scorn is the only whip for such men; and to that," she added, casting one fiery look upon him, which, if looks could scathe, must have consumed him where he stood, "to that, and his own guilty soul, I leave him."

"By St. George! Isabella is in the right of it," exclaimed Sir Henry Oswald; "and I will have it so. And if I choose to overlook this insult, in very scorn of the insulter, I think no one will deem it wise to take up my quarrel, or hint that I know not how to consult best for mine own honour!"

Not a word more was spoken; De Rochefort and Bellechassaigne bowed in silence; and with a haughty toss of her imperial head, shaking

off every thought of tenderness or weakness, she swept on, unblighted by the brief gust of passion which had passed over her, and departed from that bright assembly, heart whole, and fancy free. While with the agonies of hell itself alive at his heart's core, finding himself shunned equally by all, forsaken even by his stanch friend, Bellechassaigne, and loathed by the very servants who attended him, Marmaduke Wyvil, threw a dark mantle over his wedding bravery and hurried back on foot, sullen and dogged, to his cheerless home.

CHAPTER XII.

NIGHT had already fallen misty and dim over the great city, and all the evil things that prowl the streets during the hours of darkness were up and stirring. Few lights were seen in those days, even in the most public thoroughfares, except from the lamps in the shop-windows, or the lanterns which hung over the gates of the better mansions—save where some proud hotel or royal palace cast from its long range of illuminated casements a lustre as of day into the gloom without. At ordinary times, one of the brightest of these stately residences was the Hotel de Gondi, but on the night in question all its façade was steeped in utter darkness. Even the lantern at the *porte-cochere* had been left unlighted in the great sorrow and disturbance which had fallen on the household, when Alice was brought home by Chaloner, and con-

veyed to the chamber whence she was never more to issue living.

It was indeed not a little singular to what a degree during her short residence in Paris, the young English girl had won the affections of all who came within the sphere of her attractions; there was not in the Hôtel de Gondi a menial, from the highest to the lowest, who did not mourn, as if *about* to lose a dear friend, when it was rumoured in the household that she was surely stricken beyond the power of man to save, beyond the hope of recovery. Yet so, in truth, it was; for, as is oftentimes the case with the terrible disease that was destroying her, it had worked secretly and silently, sapping and undermining the very throne of life, scarcely suspected, until the last moment. That morning when she set forth to the church, though any eye could have discovered that she was dangerously, perhaps even incurably, ill; no one could have doubted that there were weeks, perhaps months, or even years, of life in that delicate attenuated frame; nor, although well aware that she was dying, had she herself entertained the least suspicion that her hour was so near at hand.

But when she had been brought home, and recovered from her death-like swoon, it needed not the sentence of the leech to prepare the minds of the beholders, for the seal of approaching dissolution was stamped on her brow visibly, and she herself declared that she knew certainly, and felt that her days were numbered and her hours fast dwindling into minutes. Much has been written to no purpose, if it is necessary now to say that, for her, death had no terrors; that he came on her not in the guise of the cold and terrible destroyer, but of the mild consoler, the healer of all mortal sorrows, the guide destined to introduce her to a holier and happier land. Her worldly business had been all arranged, she had no cares to vex her parting moments, no earthly passions, no strong mortal ties, to render her pure spirit reluctant to depart. She had lived always as one who was assured that this night her soul might be required of her; and now, that the hour had arrived for her, whose coming no man knoweth, she was filled not with dread, or anxiety, but with a humble joy, a confidence of hope that rested on the rock of ages.

As soon as she had recovered the full mastery

of her senses, after the shock which scattered them so rudely, she asked for the venerable clergyman, who had officiated at her dear father's funeral; and, when he came, stretching out her hand, with a tranquil smile, she said, "I have to trouble you again, good Doctor Markham, a little sooner than I had dared to hope. I have sent for you to pray with me, and if you find me in a fitting state, to administer the holy sacrament before I go hence." And, while he stayed with her, so fully satisfied was he with her condition, that he was afterwards wont, so long as he lived, to allude to that Christian death-bed, as, the one of many terrible and awful scenes he had witnessed, which by its bright and tranquil lustre sufficed almost to efface from his memory the combined horrors of the rest.

After about two hours, during which she remained alone with the good old man, she requested to see her friends, Madame de Gondi and Henry Chaloner especially; and, on their coming, she told them in a few brief and touching words, that, knowing her own hour to be near at hand, she wished that they should know it likewise, and not sorrow, but rejoice as she did. "And now," she said, when, with a voice

unfaltering, and a clear eye, she had made this announcement, "let us talk pleasantly and calmly, as it befits friends to do, who have many things to say to each other, before parting, one to set forth upon a long and distant journey, the others to await, yet awhile, the hour set for their departure. My own mind is made up fully to the change; and though it may be hard to part from some we love, exceeding great is the reward. I am sure, therefore, that you will restrain your griefs that you may not disturb that serenity which, I thank Him who gives it, now reigns in all my spirit."

Madame de Gondi strove to speak, but she could only press her hand in silence; yet her tears, though they could not be restrained, flowed silently, and she maintained at least an outward semblance of composure, aided by the extraordinary, self-command of Alice, and by the almost stoical philosophy of Chaloner, who begged her to speak on, and tell him all her wishes, which, to the very least, she might rest sure should be obeyed, even to the letter. "First then," she said, "tell me what passed in the church, after I fainted—that one thing somewhat disturbs me—for I fear I did wrongly

to go thither; and that I have frustrated all my schemes.—Is it so, Henry?"

"Remember, Alice," answered Chaloner, "before I tell you any thing—remember that *we* can but propose schemes here, and that it is He who disposes them, as it may seem good to his wisdom, which is omniscience.—Remember also that from the first, I disapproved your plans, although I yielded to your wishes!"

"I do remember—I do," replied Alice, "now tell me, in any event I shall not now repine—as far as concerns myself I have done with the earth, and its idols."

"I will tell you,—when you fainted, that man, whose name I will not trust myself to mention, left his place by the side of Isabella, and rushed towards you, with words on his lips that proved to all who heard them, that he had been in the very act of deliberate perjury, when your fall, and the discovery of your face, saved him from that dread consummation of his crimes—the archbishop refused to proceed with the ceremonial, and Isabella Oswald so cast him off from her, when he would fain have led her back to the altar, as shows that her heart is whole, and

that no weak regrets will make her duty painful!"

Alice listened attentively to every word he spoke; and, as he ceased, she drew a deep breath, and then paused for some time, her lips moving slightly as if she syllabled a prayer. "Amen!" she said, at last. "His will be done. Yet I had hoped it might be otherwise. What were the words he spoke?"

"Words, Alice," Chaloner replied, "which clearly showed that, while he was standing at God's altar to wed one woman, his heart was with another; he called you *his! his* Alice!"

A faint brief flush came over the pale face of the dying girl, but, like the summer lightning, ere you could say look! look! how beautiful! it was gone. "Is it indeed so?" she said, thoughtfully; "then it is for the best; for she is not the woman to brook divided love. Frail creatures, how frail are we all, and easily misled, even in our best intents and purest motives! There, in the wish of doing good was I near making one noble creature wretched, and one most guilty. Alas! alas! and, perhaps, even then, when I thought myself most passionless, it was the mist of

earthly passion that dimmed my mental vision, and clouded my more sober reason."

"If it had not been so, dear Alice," Chaloner soothingly replied, "you had been more than mortal."

She was again silent, and remained so for many minutes, with her eyes closed, and her hands folded on her bosom, and when she spoke again, her voice was considerably weaker than before. "It is gone," she said; "it is past and over, it was the last! Now let us speak of other things. That deed is worthless now, and the will, likewise. Is it not so?"

"Unless you wish to renew them, without the conditions," answered Chaloner. "Which, if you desire it, can be done."

"No!" she said, "I will not—have you the will here, Henry?"

"I thought you might wish for it, therefore I have"——

"That is well—let me see you burn it—my eyes are cleared now, and I believe I see the path of duty straight before me." She was obeyed immediately; and, after she had looked at the document, it was consigned to the flames, and destroyed—then she requested Henriette

to bring pens and paper, and dictated a few words, brief and explicit, bequeathing every thing to Chaloner, with the exception of the one legacy. Having herself read them, she signed the paper with a firm hand, and, having seen it witnessed by Madame de Gondi and the good clergyman, she handed it to Chaloner, with these words, "May you enjoy it, as you will use it, well—and take care of my poor, for they will miss me. I have, you know, left every thing to your discretion; but there are many things that I will pray you to do, as if I had named them in my will. You will keep up the old house, Henry, and retain all the old servants, for my sake—when they become too old, we ever gave them little pensions, and, if they wished it, a small farm or cottage. You will do likewise. Poor Jeremy is growing infirm, even now; you will look to him. I have heard say that good John Sherlock would wed our little Marian Rainsford—if it be so, you will give her a dowry, and, at all events, the 'Stag's Head,' rent free, so long as she will dwell there. I think she will not marry. There are more things, but there comes a faintness over me at times—and I begin to grow forgetful

—but your own feelings will tell you what I would wish done."

"I think so, dearest Alice," he replied. "I know all your old clients, and you may be quite sure that, so long as I live, they shall want nothing; but shall ever find a friend and protector in their landlord—and when I die, I will provide for their welfare."

"Oh! you must leave them, as a sacred trust, as I do,"—answered she, rallying again a little—"as a sacred trust, *to your son* Henry! For, when this grief is overpassed, you must marry." But he shook his head sadly, and a grave shadow, as if of displeasure, settled down on his features, and he turned his face to the wall, and answered nothing.

"Give me to drink," said the sufferer; "Give me to drink, Henriette—I am athirst and faint; and I would fain stay a few minutes longer here, if so it may be. I expect to see one here, anon!"

"Give her some wine and water, lady," said the clergyman; "it cannot hurt her now, and may yield her some support,"—and, in a lower voice, he added—"Whom does she think to see?"

"No one," said Henriette, with great difficulty, choking her tears—"her mind wanders."

"I think not," replied the good man, "I never saw one clearer, or more conscious to the last. God grant us all such deathbeds!"

She drank, and seemed refreshed and strengthened; and after lying tranquilly for a few minutes, she raised herself a little up, and said—"Now—it will be a painful scene for me to bear, and you to witness, but I should not like to go hence without speaking to my poor English servants, and bidding them farewell. They might well think unkindly of it, if I were to leave them in a foreign land, without a word at parting. Henry, will you call my poor girl Margaret, and the two men, Charles and Gregory,—tell them to be as calm as possible, for noisy lamentation would afflict me." He rose at once, and left the chamber, and in a minute or two returned again, leading himself the girl Margaret, who, as pale as death, and seemingly upon the point of fainting, yet kept her sobs down and controlled her tears wonderfully, through the great love she bore her mistress; while the two men, stout, hardy, and athletic yeoman, either of whom could have felled an ox with

but slight effort, followed—their knees knocking together, and the big tears rolling down their cheeks, and moistening their close-curled beards.

"I have sent for you, my good friends," she said, in a tolerably firm voice, "to take you by the hands, and thank you for the good service you have done me, and one better far than me—and to bid you farewell before I leave you—for I must leave you, and that very shortly. I pray you, Charles, control yourself, or your grief will unsettle me. I am sorry, my friends, to leave you—but I leave you in kind and familiar hands—for, General Chaloner will be the master of all my estates, and, of his love for me, will provide well for all of you who deserve well of him, and I doubt not that will be all of you. God bless you, my good friends, and keep you! may you be good and happy!—And now, before I say farewell, I would pray you, if ever I have been fretful, or over-urging, or unkind to you, as I have doubtless been many times, that you will forgive"——

"Oh, no! oh, never! never!" exclaimed all three at once, as well as they could speak for the tears and sobs, which now burst out all

uncontrollable—"God bless you! God preserve you, Mistress Alice!—you, fretful or unkind—you, over-urgent! you, from whom no one of us, for all we have been greedy, lazy, and unthankful knaves, has ever heard any one harsh word!" cried Charles.

"No, not unthankful, Charles," said Gregory, "all else is true, but we are not unthankful!"

"Indeed, you are not!" answered Alice, now moved herself to tears, "nor lazy, nor aught else, but true and honest—but shake hands with me, and then say—farewell—for this is almost too much for me. God bless you, and farewell! Good General Henry will be soon your master!"—and the men grasped her small feverish hands, and bedewed them with their tears, and left the room in an agony of grief.

Then she said—"Kiss me, Margaret; you are a very good girl, and have been so to me, ever—I love you very much, and I thank you very truly for all your goodness; especially in these late days, since grief and trouble have lain heavy on me. Kiss me—farewell!—Whatever Henry Chaloner *can* do to make you happy, I promise you, he *will* do. Now, if you wish to stay to the last with me, sit down there, I can

trust you to control yourself, cannot I, Margaret?"

"Yes, Mistress Alice," the girl answered, with a great effort; "I will be very quiet, if you will let me stay with you." And she walked with a tottering step to the farther corner of the room, and, sitting down, covered her face with her apron, and, though her whole frame shook with the violence of her emotions, she uttered no sound that was heard by Alice, or by any one of the watchers.

After this agitating scene, Alice again took a little wine and water, and soon afterward sank into a calm and gentle sleep, breathing as regularly as an infant, with a sweet smile on her lips, and an expression, almost angelical, pervading all her features. More than once, each of those, who watched beside her, stole with a noiseless step up to the pillow, half doubting, so quiet was that slumber, whether she had not already passed away; but it was not so; and after she had been asleep above an hour, and it was now drawing near to morning, a light footstep was heard at the door, and a gentle hand touched the latch, but seemed afraid to raise it. Madame de Gondi rose, and stole to

the door, and opened it very quietly, and there, to the astonishment of every one, stood Isabella Oswald, in all her superb bridal attire, but with the trace of many tears upon her beautiful cheeks.

"I have been without," she whispered, "these five hours and more, and can no longer bear it; let me stay here, I will not disturb you."

Henriette led her in without a moment's hesitation, answering—

"I am glad you have come hither. I think she wished to see you, and had a sort of prescient hope that you would come."

"And is she indeed dying?" asked the agitated girl. "Oh, but this is too fearful! Never, never shall I forgive myself!"

"Forgive yourself—for what?" asked Chaloner, in the same low tone.

"For having ever seen him—for having ever listened to him; had I not, she had now been well and happy."

"God knows!" said Chaloner, "and He only; but I think no one could have been happy with that man; and I am quite sure no one could be happier than she is. At all events it

can be no blame to you, who never heard or dreamed of her existence. But, hush—hush! she is waking."

And as he said the words, she opened her soft eyes, and looked around her, but without seeming to notice any one. "Oh!" she said, "I have slept so sweetly, and heard such heavenly strains, and seen such glorious forms, all gold and azure." And she seemed to ponder for a moment, and then said, "It was a dream, but most delightful. All these things too, ere long, will be as a dream likewise. Dear Henriette, dear Chaloner, I am very shortly going. I had hoped to see Isabella—but"—

"I am here, Alice," whispered the lovely girl, rising from her seat, which was screened by the draperies of the bed; "I have been here all the time!" And, kneeling down beside the pillow, she buried her face in the clothes, and clasping her friend's hand, wept bitterly.

"You do not weep for me, Isabella," said Alice; "or if you do—truly you waste your tears. I would not have it otherwise than it now is; no, not for any thing that human hopes can compass! I am happy—perfectly happy!—and if aught was wanting, now that you are

with me, that want is removed; for I wished, dearest Isabella, before I died to ask your pardon for the pain I have given you unwittingly. I meant, indeed to do well, and to sacrifice myself only, and lo! I have sacrificed you!"

"Sacrificed *me!*" cried Isabella, excited beyond all control. "Say—rescued me! say—saved me from perdition! If you had not done as you have, I should have either pined for his love, and so been wretched; or wedded him, and perished! Pardon me, pardon me, Alice! my feelings are too strong for me. Oh, God! oh, God! what have I done that this burden of your death should rest upon me? You! whom I saw so fresh and lovely, not six weeks gone, entering the gates of Paris. You, whom I now see dying!" and with the words she burst into a fit of violent and agonizing sorrow, so loud and convulsive, that the old clergyman arose, and signing to the others to sit still, half led, half lifted her, out of the chamber; but Alice looked at Chaloner, and said, "Is she not noble—is she not noble?"

"Yes," he replied, "very noble!"

"And so are you!" she answered very quickly, as if afraid that he would interrupt

her. "You two are the two noblest beings on the face of the earth. The noble should mate with the noble. She, in her great, brave impulses; you, in your grand composure. Nay, do not interrupt me, Henry, nor shake your head so sadly. I do not say now, nor to-morrow — but when this sorrow shall have passed away! It is my last wish—my last earthly hope! I know she would make you happy. I know I would rather see her mistress of my Woolverton than any woman living!—There do not answer me. Forgive me if I have hurt you. Think of it; and Heaven bless you!"

Chaloner did not answer her, but he sat and mused deeply; and, though at the time he thought of it as a wild fancy, and impossible, years brought to pass a change in his feelings. Meanwhile Alice, whose strength had been failing rapidly, was quite exhausted by the vehemence of her own late utterance; and feeling she was almost gone, cried, "Henriette, Henriette!—come to me!—quick, quick!" And as she came, she drew her down close to her bosom, and kissed her eyes and lips. "Thank you," she said; "may God deal with you as you have dealt

with us! Bless you—farewell! Now, Henry, kiss me; dear, dearest Henry! And Isabella—call her—where is Isabella?"

"Here," she replied, as, having calmed herself, she again returned. "I am here, Alice."

"Where, where?—I do not see you. My eyes are growing dim. Your faces are all leaving me. Where are you, Isabella?"

"Here, dearest," she replied, taking her by the hand; "do you not feel me?"

"Yes!—kiss me!" And as she stooped to do so, she tried to whisper, but spoke quite aloud, for her numbed ear had lost its sense. "If ever he ask aught of you, for my sake grant it, Isabella." The beautiful girl had no clue whereby to guess her meaning, and fancied that her mind was wandering, and that she thought of Wyvil; she made, therefore, no reply, but pressed her hand in silence. Alice sank back at once upon her pillow, and, though for nearly half an hour she continued to breathe, she did not speak, or move, or unclose her eyes any more, till suddenly she sat erect, and looking upward with a sublime and rapt expression, cried out in a clear and musical voice, "Hush!—Listen! Do you not hear the harp and the

seraphic strains? Glory—glory be to God in the highest! Hush! hush!" And, with her arms extended, and her eyes radiant with a vision that, perhaps in that dread moment, pierced into realms beyond mortality, her pure soul passed away. The old clergyman saw that she was no more; and, as she fell down on the bed, he said in a high sonorous tone, as if of triumph, "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE morning had already broken when Alice Selby passed into another world, and the cold gray light of the early dawn was mingled in the chamber of the dead with that of the waning lamps, which had burned all night long unheeded; and pale and haggard, with the excitement and the agitation of those trying scenes, were the countenances of the weary watchers, and their hearts faint with awe and sorrow. But now, when all was over, they withdrew, the women to seek some repose, for they were absolutely wearied out, and Chaloner to brood over the things that had passed, and to devour his own grief in silence. For, self-subdued although he was, by a habit which had grown upon him, until it was now almost a second

nature, his character had been originally fiery and vehement, and prone to bursts of sudden passion; and it had cost him no small labour or exertion to bring his temper under subjection to his reason.

It was not against his passions only, that he had at this time to contend, although there was very much to excite these in what had taken place, in the villainous, and, as he believed, cold-blooded, treachery of Wyvil, by which the man he most esteemed in the world, and the only woman he had ever loved, had been brought, almost before his eyes, the one to an unnatural, the other to a most cruel and untimely death—and many times his spirit had been strangely tempted to inflict summary and instant punishment upon the traitor. But this was not all, for although Henry Chaloner could not be called a fanatic, nor, in embracing the political creed of the Puritans, had he adopted their intolerant and bigoted religious tenets, it must yet be remembered that a species of wild superstition was a strong characteristic of the age, the country, and especially of the faction to which he was attached. His own mind was naturally of an imaginative turn, and how ex-

cellent so ever, as relates to fine arts and poetry, imagination may be deemed, it is assuredly, when applied to religious matters, one of the most deceitful and dangerous of attributes.

Thus, though by no means a fanatic, neither a bigot, nor a canter, neither deluded by the jargon of the day, nor a deluder of others, he had imbibed some strange sentiments, and pondered over them, till they had almost become opinions. No character of mortal man can be perfect, and this was the darkest blot on Chaloner's. A fancy had possessed his mind, long before the occurrence of the events, which now seemed about to stir that fancy into action, that men, their passions, and their very crimes, were instruments of the Almighty, to punish the faults and avenge the sufferings of others. And farther yet, that there was a species of dark inspiration, a divine destiny, inborn and felt within, compelling him who was its subject to the performance of whatever it suggested. In his more calm and reasonable moments, when no extraneous influence was brought to bear upon this perilous creed, he was wont half to doubt the nature of this inspiration, and altogether to dispute, if not deny,

its operation as justifying the deeds of the individual. But now, with his passions all excited to the utmost, and all bearing with concentrated power upon this one weak point in his judgment, he was fearfully disturbed, and strongly goaded forward to the perpetration of a deed, which, had he been one whit less strong in his religious creed, he would have surely considered it his bounden duty to perform—the avenging, namely, with the sword, the deaths of his friends and kindred.

That was an age, when such a deed was resorted to on the most slight and trivial grounds —when no honourable man of the world would have dreamed for an instant of omitting to call out a rival, on the most venial provocation, to the arbitrament of blood—when no man, whatever, unless a cripple or infirm by years, would have admitted the possibility of refusing such an invitation. Not one of these, however, was Henry Chaloner, his notions of religious duty were by far too severe, his mind too firmly balanced, and his whole character too strictly conscientious, to be deterred from doing that which he considered right, or to be led into doing that which he thought wrong, by the sophistry

of all the world united. Wronging, insulting, no one, there was no risk that he should ever be called to account himself; and, proved as he was to be the bravest of the brave, tried in some six pitched battles and skirmishes almost innumerable, bearing the scars of eight wounds on his body, he well could afford to overlook the arrogance of foppish courtiers, or the presumption of boy braggarts—and many a time he had done so; and, for a wonder! the world's opinion had sustained him, and, though he had treated with mere scorn more than one petty insult, suffering the authors to creep off unpunished, not a doubt, not the shadow of a shade hung over Chaloner's unblemished courage.

This was a different case, however, and far differently did it work on his strong mind—strong even in its weakness. He had seen his dear friend, the man to whom he had ever looked up as his father, slain almost by the hand, indisputably by the deed, of this base person, whose treachery had blighted also the best and brightest hope of his existence. He saw the murderer of both—escaped, at large, beyond the reach of any earthly punishment. His morbid

fancy pictured him, perchance, laughing in his secret soul over the ruin he had wrought, and making mockery with his wild companions of her, whom he had slaughtered by the sword of her own best affections. He set his teeth hard, as the thought occurred to him; and walked, grasping his sword-hilt, to and fro the room in fearful perturbation. For, although, when conversing with Madame de Gondi, his clear mind had rejected the idea as absurd, of judging mortal happiness by the scale of mortal success, although he could then distinctly see that this same man, this very Wyvil, must of necessity be wretched even here, he could no longer satisfy himself with the same reasoning, he could no longer attain the same end. Wyvil seemed to him now the proud, triumphant, and exulting villain—the wretch, escaped from all the whips of justice, beyond all reach of mortal punishment. His mind was no longer clear, the cloud of passion had dimmed its perception, and through that cloud loomed up gigantically the monstrous combinations of fantasy and superstition.

All that day long he fasted; no food had passed his lips since breakfast on the previous

morning, nor any drink save water, nor had he closed his eyes, in sleep—but without sitting, or even pausing, he walked up and down the floor, with uneven and irregular steps, lashing himself while he believed even that he was pondering gravely, into a species of solemn fury. The shadows changed upon the dial; and noon succeeded morning; and the evening twilight darkened upon the afternoon; and still he strode backward and forward, the rafters creaking under his heavy foot, and the old servants, who had never witnessed such a mood before since they had served him, marvelling what should next be.

Watching, and fasting, and the terrible excitement, when added to the agony of grief, had for the time completely over-mastered him. His better mind was utterly obscured and hidden. He had, at first striven, and for a little while successfully, with the dark fantasy that crept upon him, whispering that he was the chosen instrument, appointed from above, to wreak the vengeance of the Lord upon the secret criminal. Had there been any human voice to speak to him, to back the small still voice within, which, though half-drowned by

the trumpet-tongued suggestions of pride and wrath and superstition, and the overwhelming sense of wrong, still feebly warned him—he had come off victorious! As it was, more and more as hour succeeded hour, and darkness came at last to add its gloomy influence to the gloomy colours that already steeped his soul, the heavy superstition grew upon him—till he had convinced himself at last—sad truth! that it should be so easy, even for a good man, to convince himself that wrong is right, and passion principle —'till he convinced himself at last, that it was a solemn and a holy duty, enjoined upon him by a supernal will which he had neither right nor power to resist, to call this murderer forth to the field of arms, and there to slay him as a great sin offering, and sacrifice. It may seem strange, that a mind so well balanced, as that which I have represented Chaloner to possess, should have been mastered by so vain and absurd a superstition. But we must recollect, that the age wherein these things occurred, was an age of anomalies and wonders; that men and women, wise men and virtuous women! in those days did things undoubtingly, unblushingly, which now would stamp them fools and harlots

—that mortal passions had the widest scope, and common sense and reason the least sway—that fifty things were admitted and believed as truths, which the merest schoolboy of the nineteenth century would prove to be fallacious—and, above all, that the minds of men were greatly agitated and disturbed on matters both of politics and religion, as generally is the case in the commencement of what may be called an era of transition.

That Henry Chaloner was a wise man and a good man, according to the wisdom and the virtue of the day in which he lived, is an unquestionable truth; but he was neither better nor wiser than the best of the children of his generation. He was not, that monster of a poetic fancy, a being of unerring instincts, and unblemished virtue. Many things combined, to bring about this hallucination; for it was clearly an hallucination, and one of a very dangerous tendency, and had it been indulged, or carried much beyond the point which it had now attained, it speedily might have degenerated into a religious frenzy—but that they did so combine, is certain. At many moments of his life, he would unquestionably have

denounced the very part which he was about to play, as the height of insanity, or laughed at it, as the height of folly—nevertheless he now yielded to the impulses that were hot within him; and fancying himself the instrument of a great superior will, became the dupe and tool of his own little passions. He had prayed several times in the course of the day; and to his fervid and imaginative temperament, the very act of prayer, by stimulating the religious sentiment, had increased rather than diminished the morbid action of his mind, and rendered him more confident in the right, more resolute to the performance of his self-imposed solemn duty.

And now that his determination was once firmly taken, all the disturbance and anxiety of his manner vanished. He washed, and dressed himself with care, arranging his locks which he wore long and waving, though not exactly after the curled and flowing fashion of the cavaliers, with much attention, clad himself in a full suit of the deepest mourning, black broadcloth faced with silk, with neither velvet nor embroideries, nor lace, but only a broad band

of cambric round his neck, and plain ruffles of the same at his wrists; and summoning Frank Norman desired him to be in attendance in an hour, with three horses and another servant. Then he caused supper to be served; and, although alone, he sat down to his meat with a good appetite, and ate, and drank his wine, more than one kind of which was set before him, with evident appreciation. He even spoke a few words cheerfully to the old steward who attended him, saying that he had resigned his office as envoy to the Hague, and should return to England within a few days, more or less. With him, the strife was to make up his mind—the anxiety, to decipher the right law of conduct—that once done! all else was a mere thing of course. No weak irresolution ever marred his action—no paltry fear of consequences—no doubt of results, so much as once occurred to him. Resolved to do a thing, he ever went right on and did it! And that had been the one great secret of his success in life—that, acting ever upon principles which he knew, or conscientiously believed to be right and true, he always brought a clear

head to the execution, quite unencumbered by any doubt or hesitancy, and while other men were planning he was doing.

Thus in the present instance, though it had cost him much anxiety and thought, before he could resolve upon his principle of conduct; and, though it must be admitted that he had reasoned himself into a false conviction and an evil resolution, yet once determined he never cast another thought to the execution! It never once so much as entered his mind, that Wyvil, whom he knew to be a brave man and a master of his weapon, might chance to be the victor. It never appeared possible to him, that he could fail! He was the destined and appointed instrument, the unconcerned avenger of his kindred, the weapon in the hands of the Almighty.

He had no wrath, no angry feeling against the wretch, whom he was about to slay as a sacrifice, not to the vain punctilio of a code, but to a jealous God. Nay! at that very moment, he would have unsheathed his sword to rescue him from peril at any other hand; he would have braved the fiery conflagration, or rushed into the swollen torrent, to save his

life this minute, that he himself might take it in the next. Had he been one iota more a fanatic, or less a gentleman and soldier, he would have stabbed him to the heart, and deemed assassination virtue. As it was, such an idea came not near him; nor any other, except to call him to the field with equal arms, and slay him there in solemn combat. And, with that end in view, he took the measure of his sword with a strip of paper, and, when his horses were announced, buckled his riding-cloak about him, and went forth as tranquilly to meet his mortal foe, as if he had been preparing for a banquet.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MAN more thoroughly and utterly wretched than Marmaduke Wyvil existed not, perhaps, on the whole face of the world, peopled although it is with wretches. There was not in his heart one spark of consolation, one gleam of hope—not even that last stay and resource of the miserable, the consciousness of right, the sense of self-respect. His schemes had failed, deep-laid as they appeared, even in the moment of their consummation! He was completely ruined—and to his own soul he could not deny it—ruined entirely by his own knavery and folly! He had destroyed the man who had preserved his own life at the risk of all most dear to him! for, though he knew not all the circumstances

of Mark Selby's death, and though he strove to palliate it to his own accusing conscience, he was yet perfectly aware that he was the cause of his decease. He had broken the heart of the woman he loved best, and to whom he owed the deepest gratitude—who loved him with a love almost surpassing that of woman—who might, who *would*, have rendered him the happiest of men, but for his own inconstancy and treasonable falsehood!

He knew not, it is true, that she was dead; but, like all others who beheld her fainting in the cathedral, he had seen that the seal of death was on her brow already; and, had he not seen it, he felt but too surely, amid the dread condemnation of his own inner heart, that Alice Selby was a plant of too frail growth, and of too slight a tenure on this mortal soil, to endure such a shock, so rude and sudden, as that which he had given to her most mortal sensibilities! And what had been the consequence of all this crime and falsehood? What but the demolition of his own hopes and prospects? His present means all lost already; his chance of recovering them in France, or of returning home with honour, either of which alternations

was in his reach three little days ago, cast to the winds!—his very reputation tainted—his name for chivalry and honour blighted! It might have been, had success crowned his wickedness, had he gained by his treason the lovely bride and the vast wealth for which he had played so foully—it might have been then, in the exultation of his retrieved fortunes, the fruition of all present pleasure, and the anticipation of a proud and ambitious future, that he could have drowned the voice of conscience, have blotted from his memory the thoughts of those who had so nobly succoured him in his hour of need, and whom he had so repaid. But now, when every thing was lost; when pressed and persecuted by his creditors, forsaken by all those whom he had consorted with in his better days, looked upon coldly by the king, scorned and despised by those who would a week before have courted him, the memory of his past sins, enhanced by his present misery, was constantly before him, conjuring up dread remorseful phantoms that threw a fixed and moody gloom, not far removed from settled melancholy, alike over his waking and his sleeping hours.

He had not left his apartment, and in truth

dared not leave it, since the moment when he had hurried homeward, baffled and despairing, from the very ceremonial to which he had so long looked forward as to the consummation of his triumph. His servants, all recent hirelings, except the valet Clement, and his groom, a Yorkshireman from the North Riding—for both of whom he had sent to England immediately after his arrival in Paris—had deserted him so soon as they found that his fortunes were no more in the ascendant; and these two remained stanch to their master, from ancient habit, and from a downright instinctive fidelity—more like that of the canine species than of the human race—which rendered them reluctant to desert a falling man, rather than from any real love or esteem for an employer, whose faults were tainted with that mean and truckling falsehood, so odious to the English character. His doors had been besieged by angry and impatient creditors; and he had passed the night following that fatal ceremonial, and the day which succeeded it, in an alternation of despondent fits, and violent bursts of nervous irritable restlessness that bordered closely upon downright madness. Now, sitting with his head propped

upon his hand, gazing into vacancy with a dim lack-lustre eye, as though the atmosphere were peopled with dread forms for ever present—now, hurrying to and fro the spacious room, raving aloud, and uttering strange imprecations, till worn out and exhausted by his violence, he would again sink down into his chair, and resume his moody meditations.

His meals had been prepared for him with sedulous care by his faithful servant, who had ventured even to press him to his meat, and to argue with him on the foolishness of such impotent and child-like passion. But it was all in vain—the man's remonstrances were received either with an apathy that left it doubtful whether he comprehended what was said to him, or with rejoinders so impatient and ill-tempered, that they soon quieted all interference. He had, it is true, tried to force his appetite—had compelled himself to swallow one or two morsels, but the meat would not down—and the man, who had oftentimes partaken, with zest and real appetite, of hard ammunition-bread, washed down by wretched brandy, while within point-blank range of hostile cannon-shot, which, although falling thick around

him, had not the power to spoil his stomach, now loathed the most delicious *ragouts* and *consommés*, cowed and disheartened by the creatures of his own conscience. But in proportion as he felt no hunger, so had a fiery and incessant thirst tormented him; and though he had drunk vastly more of the strongest and most generous wines, than at another period would have sufficed to lay him senseless, the liquor seemed to possess no power upon his system, so thoroughly were its effects superseded by the terrific and unnatural excitement of his brain and nerves.

It was a cold and gusty evening, and a fire had been burning on the hearth all day, but it had for some time become very low, and only a few half-dying embers cast a red wavering light over the deep jaws of the large arched chimney. The evening had set in quite darkly, and it was growing very cold; yet so great was the heat and fire within him, that when Clement brought lights and would have replenished the fire, Wyvil insisted on it that the room was stifling hot, and the air thick and murky, and positively forbad his heaping on the wood which he had fetched for the purpose. The man shrugged up his shoulders, but said nothing, and continued

fidgeting about the room for some time, as if unwilling to leave Marmaduke alone in that fearful mood, lowering the heavy curtains over the long windows, which reached quite down to the floor, opening with casements upon a narrow ledge of projecting stonework, unguarded by any balcony or balustrade; setting the chairs in order, and arranging the various articles which lay scattered on the tables, until a sharp and peremptory order forced him, although evidently anxious and unwilling, to quit the apartment.

As soon as he had shut the door, Wyvil arose from his chair again, and began traversing the room with a hasty fretful gait, not unlike that of the caged hyena; muttering the while about the heat and closeness of the air, gasping as if for breath, and pausing more than once to drain a goblet of the racy Burgundy, which stood on the table. At last, he stopped before the window farthest from the hearth, and pushing back the curtain, threw the tall casement open; and then stood for some minutes gazing out into the quiet night; for the weather was so unpromising and cheerless, that the streets were almost deserted, and so few sounds were abroad,

that from the ear alone it would have been difficult to imagine that he was in the heart of a great city.

"Ay!" he said, "This is calm—this is refreshing—the cool tranquil night-air!—that closed room's atmosphere is like the vapour of a seven times heated furnace. Strange that the air should be so sultry in November! Yet it may be," he said, after a minute's thought,—"it may be that this heat, like the quenchless thirst that consumes me, has its seat in my own bosom!—I am sick—sick of this world, and aweary!"—and, leaving the window, he let the curtain once more fall across the opening; but forgot, or perhaps intentionally omitted to close the casement. "Sick of it?" he continued in a doubtful meditating tone—"then why not leave it?—It were but one little thrust—one gasp—one moment's struggle—nay, I have seen hundreds of men die without so much as one moment's struggle! There was that round-head fellow, I shot through the head at Edgehill—one moment he was charging his pike at my horse's poitrel, and the next he was motionless upon his back, as if he had been dead a week. I do not think his eyelids winked after

the ball sank into his forehead. I think, I can see him now—*he* felt nothing!—Then why not? —why not?"—and as he spoke, he took down one of the horseman's pistols that hung above the mantelpiece; tried it with the ramrod, and finding that it was loaded, opened the pan and shook the priming out, and freshened it from a small powder-horn, and then cocked the weapon.

"It were the better way—one pang! perchance, not one! and then peace!" and with the word he raised the muzzle slowly till it was level with his temples, and held it there quite steadily for nearly half a minute, and then he raised the left hand to his brow, and clasped it tightly with his fingers as if to still the throbbing; while the right, holding the murderous implement, sank gradually to his side. "Peace? peace?" he murmured next, in a tone of indecision. "That is it. Is it peace? that which cometh after; or are this heat, and thirst, and agony, but foretastes of the things that shall be? There is, methinks, a fearful scripture that tells of the tongue of one so scathed and tormented, that he craved but a drop such as should trickle from the tip of a finger dipped in water!

Strange that this should now cross my mind, that has not heard or thought of it for years! I would I knew—I would I knew if I should see these faces, that look at me always; that pale wild studious countenance of the old man, with his gray locks all blood-besprinkled! And why should they be bloody? There was not so much blood in all his veins, if I had smitten him, but I shed not his blood. Nay! but it was not shed at all! tush! this is mere dreaming! Shame on thee! Courage, Marmaduke! Courage, ha? cowardice? Fear of the present—fear of the future;—rank cowardice both ways! No! I—I dare not do it." And he let down the hammer of the pistol, and hung it up again beside its fellow, and, still grasping his fevered brow with his left hand, resumed his oft-repeated walk, but with a slower step, and an air more contemplative and less nervous than before. "I dare not," he repeated; "yet when before did my spirit fail me? And what now? what else is left to me?"

Before, however, he had time to answer that question, even to his own mind, the trampling of horses came loudly to his ear from the courtyard below, and he heard a deep sonorous voice

inquiring for Major Wyvil. He went, and looked out of the window, but so dark was the night and so dim the lantern over the door, that he could only distinguish the outlines of three figures, all on horseback. An answer was given by the old porter, whose mumbling tone reached not so high as to be audible, but that it was affirmative was evident, by the leaping of the principal person to the ground, as soon as he had the reply. And, at the same time, the jingling of his spurs, and the clash of his steel scabbard on the pavement, assured Marmaduke that he was a gentleman, and probably a soldier, who sought for him.

"Ha!" he said—"This is well—now would I wager my best horse against a mule of Arragon, that this is the bearer of a cartel, either from that misproud old doting baronet; or better yet, from some one of those prating popinjays of France. Heaven send it may!"—and his eye flashed, as it had not done for many an hour. The spurred step mounted the staircase, and paused at the door, and in a moment Clement came into the room, announcing that a gentleman was without, asking to speak with Major Wyvil.

"Who is it, Clement?" inquired Marmaduke, half doubtfully.

"I do not know, sir, he refused to give his name. Yet I have heard his voice before; though where, I cannot just now recollect."

"Are you sure, that it is a gentleman, at all, and not an archer, or a serjeant in disguise?"

"Oh no! it is a gentleman, and a soldier—I saw his hand with a fine diamond-ring upon his finger; although he hid his face from me—but it was not the diamond. No sergeant of police, or archer, ever had such a hand."

"Admit him, then, at once," said Wyvil; and the next minute a tall man entered, wearing a slouched black hat with a falling feather, dressed in deep mourning, and holding the lap of his cloak over the lower part of his face, until Clement had left the room and closed the door after him; then he withdrew the mantle, and Wyvil, whose eyes had been fixed on him, with eager expectation, started back, exclaiming—"General Chaloner!"

"Even so, Major Wyvil," replied Henry, uncovering himself as he spoke.

"And to what," asked Marmaduke, recovering himself, with a little effort, for he had been sur-

prised; and, although he knew not why, he never felt entirely at his ease in the presence of that man;—"to what circumstance do I owe the honour of again seeing Major-General Chaloner in my poor lodging? I trow it is not a visit of mere courtesy, or a call of pleasure?" and he endeavoured to veil his discomposure under a sneer.

"It is not, sir," Chaloner answered coolly, "except so far as courtesy must ever have a share in these matters. In truth I have little pleasure in your company."

"You might have spared yourself the trouble then, and me the annoyance of this untimely interruption," returned Wyvil, haughtily; "sending your wishes by a more proper messenger."

"You are wrong, sir, I could not do so, or I would," said Henry, perfectly calm, and unmoved by his insulting manner. "For, my purpose being to hand you this, the measure of my sword, and to demand a meeting from you at the *Près aux Clercs,* or whatever other place you may appoint, at the dawn of day to-morrow and, as I propose that we should meet without seconds, save only a servant on each side to see fair play,—for where is the use of involving others who have no share in our quar-

rel, in its consequences? I could not send a gentleman to bear my cartel, and, of course, would not send it by a menial."

Scarcely ten minutes had elapsed since Wyvil, in the pride and fierceness of his heart, expressed a wish that his visitor might be the bearer of a cartel; and, when he so spoke, he really did wish it; and, perhaps, had it been any other man on earth than he who it was, that summoned him to fight, he would have felt something akin to rapture at the opportunity afforded him of banishing by so vital an excitement the conscience-conjured phantoms which made his solitude dreadfully populous. But as it was, he liked it not; and he hesitated ere he answered. It was not that he feared. No! all deficient, despicably deficient, as he was in moral courage, there was no braver animal on earth; no one more full of that high dashing and impulsive gallantry, which makes it a far harder thing to sit by a mere spectator, than to rush as a leading actor into the fiercest fray. He had no dread of death at all, unless from his own hand. It was not long before that by his own hand he had actually thought to die; and, perhaps, but for the timely interruption,

he might so have died, in his greater dread of life; yet now—now—when the very circumstance had come to pass, for which he had been wishing, he shrank from it.

"I knew not," he replied, with a tongue that almost faltered, "that we had any quarrel. I do not comprehend the meaning of your claim; and, though I am the last man living who would refuse such an invitation upon cause, I may say without boasting, that I have proved myself so often to fear nothing, that I can well afford to decline a causeless challenge."

"I thought," replied Chaloner, "from all I have ever heard, that Major Wyvil was less scrupulous; but, since his conscience is so strict, I can assure him that *I have* cause—deep cause—for this proceeding. Nay, further—that it is forced upon me by no will of my own, and even in some sort against my principle. But so it is! Meet me you must!—by my hand must you fall to-morrow!"

"Are you, then, the disposer of events?" asked Wyvil, almost with a shudder; and so tamely, that he himself was astonished at his humbleness; "or how can you foretel the event

of battles? My sword is as keen as yours! my hand —"

"Trembles," said Chaloner, interrupting him; "and how should it not tremble, steeped as it is, knuckledeep, in innocent and friendly gore—heaped as it is with foul and festering sin—weighed down by conscious treason—loaded with the pure life of one who loved you, saved you, sacrificed all for you; and, for her love—you slew her!"

"There is no blood upon my hand save what was shed in battle, and in a righteous cause,—" Wyvil began, but Henry Chaloner interrupted him almost fiercely—

"Was it then in a righteous cause—was it then from a battle-field that Mark Selby's blood cried out to God for vengeance! And, lo! he has appointed an avenger!"

"Mark Selby's blood! what mean you?—I shed no blood of his—no blood of his *was* shed!"

"If not with the strong hand, with the murderous heart thou didst slay him, and his blood *was* shed! Man! man! with these eyes, with these abhorrent eyes, I saw the walls, the floor

bedabbled with the thick gore where he fell! I saw the mild benevolent face, the venerable hairs smeared with the witness of thy crime—and wilt thou dare deny it? Fool! fool! the servant had a tongue, who called thee to his chamber!—had ears, which heard the words that passed between ye—the shameful words that slew him!—had eyes, which the master he adored, steeped in the lifeblood oozing from his aged veins, ay! dying—dying by your deed! when he returned, and you had gone forth from the house, which you had plunged in sorrow. Now, then—now, then—did you not slay him? is not his blood upon your hand—upon your soul?"

Wyvil made no reply, but cast himself into a chair, and covering his face with both his hands fell into a fit of convulsive sobbing, though not a tear fell from his stony eyes, while all his sinewy frame shook with the terrible intensity of his passionate remorse—but not for that did the accuser cease from his dread appeal. "Is not *this* murder?—and if it were not, how died Alice Selby? How, I say, died *she*, that her blood is not on your soul? was it a natural decay, that bore her off, whom I

saw not three months ago as lovely as the morning, as blithe as the summer wind which wooed her tresses? Was it a casual stroke—a sudden fever—that cut her off before whose beauty, I have heard say, a king bowed, so lately? or was it—was it, I say, the canker planted in the heart of the rose, by the vile worm that crawled into that sanctuary, and marred the beauty that preserved it? Man!—if you be indeed a man, that do such things and yet live! Man! at the risk of her own, and—what she valued more—her father's life, did she preserve you from the Ironsides; who never yet did so righteous deed as they would then have performed, if they had trod your human clay beneath their horses' hoofs into the mire, which it would have polluted! Man! for your sake she rejected one who would have died or made her happy. She gave you her invaluable love, the whole and single adoration of that angelic heart! and you betrayed—rejected—murdered her! Yet more—yet more! When she knew your villainy, your loathsome baseness, she gave you, from the singleness of her own heart, the means to win her rival; and you—most miserable beast!—Nay, but I will not shame the honest

beasts of God's creation by so naming you—and you, base Judas-like betrayer, profited by her own bounty to destroy her. Have I yet said enough—or must I more? Have I now cause? Will you now fight?—or are you coward also?"

"You have said enough," replied Wyvil, withdrawing his hands, and showing his face paler than monumental marble; "and you have cause; yet spare me—spare me the misery, the guilt of further bloodshed."

"Of further bloodshed?" said Chaloner, in an inquiring tone. "The wretch is distraught with abject terror! what bloodshed?"

"Force me not, force me not, for the love of heaven, to shed thine likewise."

"Mine! my blood!—You shed my blood!" exclaimed Chaloner. "You! You fool!—miserable fool! Know you not that I call you out to slay you; chosen, appointed—yea! inspired to do this judgment? And think you that your sword can harm one hair of me? thrice armed in innocence and virtue, and thrice threefold, as the predestined instrument of His great vengeance. I call you not to fight, but to die! to give blood for blood—to make atone-

ment with your sinful life for the pure lives that you have taken! Think not to shield yourself, therefore, by that subterfuge. I shall not—cannot die by your hand. And, lo! I tell you, not of myself, but of the Spirit that possesses me—even the Spirit of Him, who alone cannot lie—you die the death to-morrow! Will you fight now; or must I brand you first and proclaim you slave and coward, till every corner in all Europe shall ring with your shame; till 'dastardly as Wyvil' shall be a byword and a proverb? and then batoon you in the public street, wherever I may find you, till you die like a slave and villain under the bastinado. Will you fight now?"

"You leave me no choice," answered Wyvil, gloomily, "but I take heaven to witness, that this encounter is of your seeking—and the guilt of it yours! If you fall, on your own head be it!"

"Amen!" said Chaloner; "but fear not on that account, for I shall *not* fall. At five o'clock, on foot, and with one servant only, will I call for you, here at this house. There lies the measure of my blade—at five! remember!" He said no more, nor waited for an answer, but

bowed his head, left the room, strode down the creaking staircase, and mounting his horse, rode deliberately to his lodgings, and within half an hour was buried in the tranquillity of calm and dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER XV.

No words can describe the state of Marmaduke, when he found himself again alone. Even while Chaloner was there, taunting and lashing him with his indignant eloquence, he had been dreadfully shocked and horror-stricken by the tidings he had brought him; and it was his pride only that even then prevented him from yielding to the full agonies of his remorse and despair. For he was very far indeed, from being in his character all evil—few men in truth are so!—and Wyvil, had there been one or two traits in his mind which were wanting, might have been as conspicuous for good as he now had become for ill. The great want, the great weakness of his character, was a lack of re-

solute and energetic will, of an established principle! His impulses were for the most part good and noble, and the resolves founded on those impulses right in the main and honourable—but the misfortune was that the impulse was immediately succeeded by another, and the first resolve supplanted by a new determination; —so that from the one radical defect of vacillation, there grew up with the growth of his mind inconstancy, and inconsistency, and falsehood.

He never, perhaps, in his life, had committed any crime with deliberate premeditation; but suffering his passions of the moment to sweep him into difficulty after difficulty, he was brought constantly into positions from which he only could be extricated by a falsehood or a crime; and then he would say and do things the very possibility of which he would have ridiculed an hour before, and the commission of which he perhaps repented before they were concluded. He was, in short, a man whose intentions were ever better than his actions, as must be the case always with those who act from impulse, not from principle. Had he been —strange as it may seem to say—a greater villain, he would not have committed one of

the offences, which rendered him so mean a wretch in the eyes of others, so miserable in his own—and when he had committed them, he would have smiled upon the ruin he had wrought, and lapped himself in his own security.

A thorough villain, acting with an end in view, would never have been guilty of the strange inconsistent folly by which, while really as much in love as he could possibly be with one woman, he had been induced to flatter and disport himself about another, till, gratifying neither passion nor ambition, he betrayed both, and finally lost both, and himself likewise! That he could never have been an originally and radically vicious man—that nature had not in his composition mixed the ingredients necessary to make up the thorough villain—was now evident enough from the tremendous paroxysm of remorseful torture into which he was thrown.

He flung himself upon his knees and strove to pray, but the words seemed to choke him—"I cannot—I cannot!" he exclaimed, "how should I—oh, my God! how should I pray to thee?—Repentance! how can *I* repent, whose

deeds are done and registered already? I can believe—I can believe right easily, that, for the thief upon the cross, that, for Cain even, there might be pardon,—but for me—no, no! it is impossible!—and I must on, on, on! deeper, yet deeper, into blood and murder!" and he sat down, and buried his head for a while in his palms, and then rose up muttering—"No! I will not, I dare not meet him. Truly he said, there was already too much blood upon my soul. I will fly—fly? but whither? Wretch, wretch! there is no spot, no foot of the wide world, to which I can escape; where my own name, my own black deeds, will not ring in my ears, and drown my soul with their eternal condemnation!—and how fly, how? with but one rouleau left of all my princely fortunes? No! here am I fettered down, crushed as completely as the fly in the devouring spider's toil—hemmed in, as the stag at bay, with the whole world howling for the savage pack that bay about me. Well, it is best so; it is fate, destiny. What fools we are, what fools! to dream ourselves free agents; we, whose whole course of life, from the cradle to the grave, is but one chain of chances, circumstances, over which we have no control, binding us in their

adamantine links, dragging us onward, where they will, now with the speed of the tornado, now slow and scarcely felt, but still omnipotent, inevitable. Why struggle then? why flutter our weak wings, when every new convulsion but cumbers us with a new chain? Be it so. I at least will strive no longer—I at least will go, henceforth, where fate leads and fortune. If they have driven me to bay, let them beware the horn! I will die, now that all is over, bravely. And yet, why die at all? Why should my spirit sink, or my heart falter, at meeting this mad fanatic—for mad he must be—thus to play prophet and avenger? Pshaw! have I not crossed swords with Fairfax, and come off unscathed; and unhorsed the butcher Harrison—both better men, I trow, than this precise and preaching puritan?

"Ho! Clement—without there—bring me more wine, and heap the fire! it waxes cold, and I am still athirst!"—and as the man came, he addressed him, speaking hastily, "Clement," he said, "thou art a faithful fellow, and hast well served me. Now, I have one more service for thee, perchance it may be the last—I stand pledged to give General Chaloner the meeting,

at five o'clock to-morrow morning, for mortal combat in the *Près aux Clercs*. We are to be attended each but by one servant, as a witness, you will go with me, Clement? If I should chance to fall you shall be my executor; and to secure your escape in case of trouble, here are a hundred louis—the last my purse holds at present;—if I survive there are bright days before us—you will go with me?"

"Surely, I will, sir," answered the servant; "else were I a poor Englishman, to leave my master at a period like that—what weapons shall I take, my sword and buckler?"

"No weapons, Clement," replied his master; "you go but as a witness, not to fight. Now, my good fellow, heap up the fire, leave me good store of wood, and let me not lack wine—and then begone to bed, for you must be on foot by five at the latest. And now good night—get thee away to bed!"

His orders were performed immediately; the fire blazed up on the old hearth, and several flasks of wine stood ready on the board, strangely contrasted with some six or seven swords of different lengths and sizes, the steel blades glittering blue and cold beside the crim-

son wine, which Wyvil was engaged in measuring. "Ay! this will do," he exclaimed at last, as he found one which matched exactly the strip of paper that Chaloner had left. "I am glad of it, it is my best blade—and a good omen too; I never used it, save when our arms prevailed:" and as he spoke, he tried its temper on the floor, bending it nearly double, and suffering it to spring back at once, which it did, brilliantly clear and elastic; he then wiped it carefully with his cambric kerchief, before he consigned it to the velvet-covered scabbard, and made two or three graceful thrusts in carte and tierce with the sheathed weapon, and as he laid it on the side-table, "This, and my skill to boot," he said, in a tone of exultation, "and may the Lord have mercy on *his* soul!" But after a moment's pause he amended the sentence, by adding the words, "who falls to-morrow! And yet, what right have I to call on Him for mercy?" he continued, relapsing again into his fearful and despondent gloom. "For me He has no mercy, else would he not haunt we with these fears; they were gone but a while ago, and now they are everywhere around me—pale, wan, reproachful faces. Tush! I will not be thus the

fool of my own fancies. Let us see if this will not banish them."

He poured out and quaffed four or five glasses in succession of the strong rich Burgundy, and stirred the logs on the hearth into a hot, fierce blaze, which filled every corner of the room with cheerful light; then he looked round him with a half-fearful gaze, and said, "They have vanished; they never brook a steady and determined eye. Yet it is passing strange, how they return for ever; and passing strange it was, that I should see blood on *his* face and locks, when I knew not that any blood had been spilt; that looks not like mere fancy! the empty phantasms of a guilty conscience!—and yet why guilty?" he went on, sometimes conversing with himself in a low smothered tone, and sometimes merely meditating and arguing with his own mind in silence. "Surely it was all fate—all fate or chance! I sought her not; it was not my fault that she sat there in the fish-house, as I rode down the hill? It was not my fault that she called to me, in her tenderness of heart, and saved me from the Puritans, and hid me in her father's house, and tended me till love grew upon us both, and has, at last, made both so

wretched! No, it was fate—all fate—and I am guiltless!" Meanwhile he continued to apply himself continually to the wine, which now appeared to take some hold on him, for his face began to get strangely flushed, though it had been before as pale as marble—and the veins on his brow were fearfully distended—and his eyes had a wild and almost insane glare, as they wandered through the vacancy of the large room. Never was a more fearful spectacle of a mind harassed and tormented by the stings of a conscience, which, despite all his attempts at self-delusion, persisted in pronouncing him miserably guilty.

He spoke no more, however, but sat quite still, fixing his eyes steadily upon the blazing embers, while past events came to his memory so palpably that he almost believed he saw them with his bodily vision. The last words he had uttered struck a new chord; and a long long array of pictures came crowding one by one upon his soul, with terrible distinctness. The gray and misty evening when he first saw her, the sandy road winding down the steep hill-side, the clump of shadowy beeches on the right hand, the swampy woodland on the

left, the sudden angle, and the scene that then flashed upon his eyes—the ivy-covered bridge, and the small fishing-house, and the fair lovely creature standing upon the platform, and beckoning him the road to safety—all, every thing was clear, and tangible as when it happened—every word that she spoke, every graceful gesture, with which she led him along the tangled deep path, the very tones of her soft silvery voice, the very touch of her warm hand, was present to him.

The scene changed, and he lay in the rude loft of the boat-house, with the harsh threats of the puritans echoing under the low vault, and the glare of their torches filling the nook in which he lay with smoky radiance; while ever and anon he seemed to hear her gentle notes, inspired with calm readiness of mind, diverting the suspicion of the vengeful searchers. Again, he was in the secret vault with that young innocent face bending compassionately over him, soothing his weary hours, by all that her simple skill in song or music or artless conversation could effect, ministering to his wants, anticipating every wish, whispering hope and consolation.

He saw her, as the first deep blush incarnadined her pale cheeks, as her soft eyes swam in a softer tenderness, as her sweet bosom heaved as if it would have burst, and her slight figure shook with the strong emotion, when he first whispered love, and her soul—though not yet her tongue—confessed it mutual! He heard her faint and interrupted words—like gentle music half-lost amid the breeze that wafts it—plighting her troth, and promising eternal confidence, and love, and fidelity! He saw her again in the hall of princes, resplendent in her unmatched beauty, worshipped by all that looked upon her, moving a star of a milder yet more glorious lustre amid that galaxy of queenly beauty—and once—once more—outstretched, pale, faint, and in the shadow of the grave, when she fell by an arrow from his quiver—that quiver, whence the shaft was drawn that had slain her father!—a witness of his wedding with another?—and how had her troth been kept, how had her love been proved, and her fidelity? Betrayed — wronged—outraged — slighted—and scorned—and trampled on, how had she borne her burden? how been avenged upon the traitor? Betrayed, she had but the

more trusted—wronged, she had but loved more —slighted, scorned, trampled on, she had been still—still faithful—till death had swallowed up fidelity! To sacrifice her all—to win at any cost his happiness—to pardon, and to love, and to load with benefits—that was the sole revenge of Alice Selby! And all these things rushed in at once upon his guilty soul, like to an entering flood-tide, and more than all these things!

For he could see the places, which she had made glad by her gentle presence, lonely and desolate, and sad. He could see her chair vacant in her wonted chamber, and her lute hanging on the wall never to sound again beneath her fairy touch—and her old favourite bloodhound stalking among the deserted haunts of his beloved mistress, and filling the courts with his vain lamentations, and pining for her love daily. He could see the merry villagers upon the May-day green despoiled of half their mirth by her absence, at whose coming all hearts bounded. He could see the old poor crouching round their fireless hearths, deprived of more than half their scanty comforts, by the loss of their benefactress. Now he could hear their

mingled voices—the stern and angry tones of manhood, the feeble mutterings of old age, and the shrill babbling tongues of childhood, all swelling one great chorus of dread imprecation against him—her slayer.

Yet, more! he saw yet more! his frenzied, fury-haunted conscience seemed to draw back the curtains of the grave, to dissipate the gloom of the death-vault, to lift the coffin-lid—and he saw—horror of horrors! the worm revelling, and corruption, the worm's sister, creeping. It was too horrible, even for his imagination, full fed as it had been with terror—as the dread image came before him, he sprang up—his hair bristling—his flesh quivering with a cold awe—his eyes fixed, and glaring—his hand pointing.

"Ha!" he cried aloud, with a wild and frightful sound, half-shriek, half-laughter, "ha! ha! who says that it is fancy?—who says that she is dead? Lies! lies! ye fool me not! I see her—there, with her mild eyes full of love and radiant tenderness—her sweet lips parted with a smile. Alice, my Alice, smile! I come—I come! Nay! leave me not—fly not! —she beckons—I will follow—I am here, love! —here!—I will follow, if it were to the pit

of—" As he uttered this wild rhapsody, he had rushed from the hearth by which he was sitting, as if in pursuit of something visible to his eyes only, to the farthest end of the room; and as the last word left his lips, the most awful word that human lips can syllable, he plunged headlong with arms outstretched to grasp the fancied fugitive, against the curtain of the farthest window—it yielded to his furious impulse—there was no casement there to check his impetus—no balustrade to save him—one moment he was staggering in the vacant air — the next he plunged, sheer downward, upon the granite pavement! It was but indeed, as he said himself, one pang! perhaps not one! for his head smote the stones first. He never moved, nor even groaned—he was dead—he had died and made no sign!

CHAPTER XVI.

It was already morning, but not daylight, for a thick heavy mist had come up from the Seine, and blotted the stars long before they set, and mustered in the narrow streets so densely that even at noonday the sun would have scarce power to make a dim and cloudy twilight through its dense fog wreaths. So dark was it, when Chaloner set forth from his lodging in the Rue Royale, that he was forced to desire Norman, whom he had chosen to accompany him, to take a lantern in his hand in order to thread the murky lanes, through which his course lay unobstructed. The clocks were already striking five; and yet, so dark and dismal was the morning, that not so much as a chance passenger was

moving in the streets—the latest revellers were abed—the earliest artisans had not stirred forth, not a chimney as yet sent up its smoke, not a window-shutter was unbarred, or a shop opened—only at rare and distant intervals, the light just flickering ere it died, in the lantern of some *porte-cochere*, gave token that the hand of man had not long since been moving.

Such was the morning, and such the aspect of the town, when Henry Chaloner arrived at the little court which separated the house, wherein dwelt his destined victim, from the open street. He was dressed in his ordinary garb—except that he was wrapped closely in a thick mantle, to guard against the inclemency of the weather—and carried his sheathed rapier in his hand. Frank Norman moving a pace or two in advance of him with his lantern.

Chaloner had not spoken a word since he left his lodgings, so heavily was his mind burdened by the tremendous thoughts engendered of his present purpose; but as he entered the little gateway in the iron palisades—"Lower your light!" he said—"Lower your light, Frank. There is a strange shadow on the pavement there before you—if it be a shadow—

The man did as he was directed, and as he did so, let fall the lantern, and started back with an exclamation of horror; for the faint gleam had fallen full on the ghastly face and mutilated form of the dead man. "What ails thee now?" cried Chaloner, entirely undaunted by the alarm of his servant, although he knew him to be brave, and true as steel against any mortal peril. "The light will be put out!" And, as he spoke, he sprang forward and caught up the lantern just in time to preserve the flickering candle it contained from extinction.

"And now," he said, "what is it that so terrified thee? Ha!" he continued, as the reviving beam showed him the fearful object, all crushed, and maimed, and gory, that lay at his very feet. "There hath been murder here! Who can it be?" and, stooping down over the grim and ghastly corpse, which lay upon its back, with the head towards him and the arms extended—for it had turned quite over in the fall—he recognised the features of the man whom he had left his home so early on that cheerless morning to send to his account unhouseled and unshriven.

One glance was enough for him!—his work was anticipated! his crime prevented!—for the cloud instantly was swept away from his mind, and in its true light he saw the deed, which, to that very moment, he had been bent on doing! He understood the arrogance, the bold presumptuous impiety of daring so much as to judge, much less to meddle with, the execution of the Lord's vengeance!

He rose from his knee an abashed and altered man.—"This is the deed of the Most High," he said, "who hath preserved me from blood-guiltiness!—I bow my knee, O Lord, humbly and thankfully—even the knee of my heart—in gratitude for thy great mercy.—For thou hast saved me, thou only, from deadly and presumptuous sin. For what am I, O Lord, that I should judge, weak sinner that I am, of thine eternal judgments?—or what am I, that I should think to execute thy vengeance on my brother!—Alas! alas! that I have so much gone astray, so far forgotten that, which in the foolishness and the vainglory of my heart, I thought I knew so well—even thy Holy Scripture!—For what have I, or any man to do, but to await thy time, as thou hast spoken—

'Vengeance is mine—I will repay, saith the Lord!'"

It was long ere the horror and the awe which these events—these terrible events, treading so quickly as they did each on the heel of the other—spread even through the volatile and gay society of Paris, passed away; but it was longer yet, before the shadow and the gloom were banished from the mind of Chaloner. From that day forth he was a wiser, and, good as he had ever been, a better man: for never—from the hour when he shrank back in dread at finding his work done by Him who needs no earthly minister to execute his judgments—did he again suffer his imagination to warp his better judgment; and in the peace of confidence he took humility and hope to be the guides of his feet in the journey through this vale of shadows.

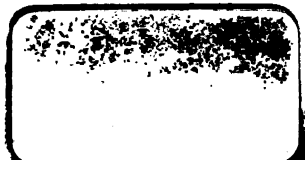
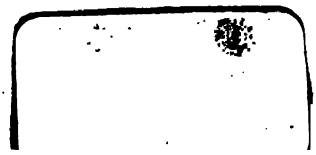
Years passed before his mind could bear to contemplate a second love; but, after years, he did love again, and if not as ardently, certainly not less fondly, nor less truly; and when, in after days he asked a favour at the hands of Isabella Oswald, she understood the meaning of

the last words of Alice Selby, and partly for her sake, and partly at her own heart's bidding she did not say him nay—and she became the mistress of Alice Selby's Woolverton, and never did she any wrong to the dying maiden's preference; for her high, noble, and brave impulses, and Chaloner's grand calm composure did temper one another well; and they lived honourable, honoured, and happy; and, when their time was come, Chaloner did bequeath his tenantry and poor, as a solemn trust and sacred, to a noble and brave son.

There are but few more of the personages to be accounted for who mingled in the thread of events which made the life of Alice Selby worthy this passing record. John Sherlock, the stout yeoman, when he found after many a month of courtship that Marian Rainsford would indeed never again marry, took to himself a buxom wife, and rode his hunter with the earl's hounds as boldly as the blithest knight of the shire, till his hair was as white as December's snow, while his frame was as stout still, and as hardy, as the oak of his native country. A mossy gravestone in the churchyard at Woolverton tells the men of this generation that

"John Sherlock, farmer, died Anno Domini 1711, having for ninety years loved God, honoured the king, and injured no man." Frank Norman, soon after Chaloner's return to England, wedded fair Cicely, the maid of the inn, and for full many a year maintained the credit of the Stag's Head, as the representative of Marian Rainsford, its tranquil and respected hostess. Madame de Gondi, though she continued all her life an arbitress of the great world of Paris, never entirely recovered the gaiety which had been her chief characteristic, before the eventful visit of the Selbys; and from that time she associated more with the good Bishop of Lizieux and Madame de Maignelai, and less with the Count Hamiltons and *Preux* Grammonts of the day. Sir Henry Oswald lived long enough to see Charles II. reseated on his father's throne; but lived *not* long enough to see him sink that throne lower, than even it had ever sunk before, or—so the Almighty still extend to it his favour and protection—shall ever sink again! And never, till he died in the arms of his dear children, did he cease to rejoice at the escape of Isabella from the wretched and guilty Wyvil, or to bless the day when she made Henry Chaloner his son.

Saving the kings only, and the cardinals, and generals who have scarce figured for a moment in our passing pageant, whose fates and follies may be read in solid history, one person alone now remains of any note, the Sieur de Bellechassaigne; and he, as constancy and valour ever should find their reward, at last overcame the opposition of Louise de St. Eloy's mother, and won a fair and gentle bride to partake the fortunes of as brilliant and as brave a partisan as ever drew sword for his lady or his king.

THE END.

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